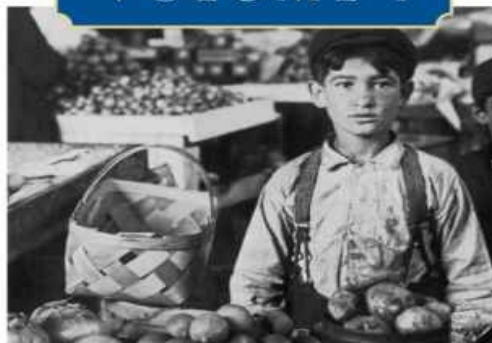


FOOD HISTORY ALMANAC

OVER 1,300 YEARS
OF WORLD CULINARY HISTORY,
CULTURE, AND SOCIAL INFLUENCE

VOLUME 1



JANET CLARKSON

Food History Almanac

Rowman & Littlefield Studies in
Food and Gastronomy

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Food History Almanac

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Preface

How on earth did I end up writing a *Food History Almanac*? I was completely disinterested in history at school and I am also not a bower-bird by nature, yet by middle age (nearly two decades ago) I found myself with an enormous, unwieldy collection of food history “stuff.”

I think it happened like this:

I have always been interested in food and cooking, and eventually I had a family to feed, so the “food” part of the topic is easy to explain.

I may not be a collector by nature, but I do love researching things that I like (such as food), and research tends to result in a large accumulation of bits of information—which I guess is, in fact, a collection of sorts.

When my children were young I remember a whole series of post-party discussions as to why we could *not* have birthday cake or Easter eggs or Halloween candy or every other holiday treat *every* day. This continual questioning (or whining) somehow melded with my basic belief that we should celebrate every day, simply for being alive in it. I had already read up on holiday food traditions and favorite foods, as per my explanation in the paragraph above, but without being conscious that this was history research in its simplest form (I hated history, remember?) Gradually I looked up more and more topics until one day, the realization dawned that history was not just about dates (I have no head for figures) or royal personages or battles—but also about real people eating food as they go about their lives.

I am also pragmatic, and once I found myself with a huge collection in the form of an untidy database on food history topics, I felt the need to do something with it. Luckily, I have always enjoyed writing. At the insistence of my son, I started my blog *The Old Foodie*. More than eight years later I am still posting five times a week, on Mondays through Fridays, and still loving it. I have also turned some of the “stuff” into books on pies, soup, and historic menus—and now this almanac.

I think that explains it.

Introduction

This book is an almanac in the broadest sense of the word in that it has a calendar format. For every day of the year there is a selection of stories with a food history theme. The range of topics is as broad as it could be made, and the time frame covers over two thousand years.

There are stories in this book about people in all sorts of circumstances in which food has figured in some way. Some are famous, some are infamous, and many are ordinary folk leading ordinary lives. There are princes and paupers here, clerics and politicians, chefs and housewives, scientists and inventors, explorers, soldiers, prisoners, artists, writers, and a whole host of others—for our common need is that we all must eat.

We must eat, but over and above sheer nutritional requirements, food is inextricably interwoven with every other facet of our lives such as our national and cultural identity, our family lives, our religion, and our entertainment. We prepare meals not just to satisfy hunger but for many other reasons too. We may, for example, use food to show love, to demonstrate power, to persuade, or to console. This larger picture of the significance of our daily food is perhaps why we seem to have a great impulse to record *what* we eat, and the circumstances and *meaning* of our meals. The descriptions of and musings on food made in journals and letters, by all sorts of people for all sorts of reasons, have been a fine source of material for this book.

The events covered in this almanac are as varied as the individuals. There are meals in palaces, poorhouses, prisons, monasteries, and ordinary homes, as well as aboard planes, trains, and ships. Some of the meals described took place on long and dangerous voyages of exploration across uncharted waters or arduous journeys through inhospitable deserts and jungles or in the thick of battle. There are meals taken in times of the greatest celebration and the greatest misery and tragedy, and there are ordinary daily breakfasts, high teas, and picnics.

The book does not only contain meal descriptions. There are dates of important laws relating to food, to significant scientific discoveries and inventions, and to ancient traditional celebrations which feature food. Here and there historical recipes have been given to illustrate a point or provide context and in general

recipes have been given to illustrate a point or provide context, and in general these are from an era contemporary to the story which they accompany.

Inevitably, some extremely interesting events just could not be pinned down with reasonable certainty and had to be omitted. Ultimately, any errors remaining in the text are mine alone.

January

JANUARY 1

NEW YEAR'S DAY

At various times in history, and in different cultures even today, the new year has begun on many different dates, but for most of the world nowadays, it is celebrated on January the first. There are as many food traditions associated with this day (and the evening before) as there are cultures and countries, and many of the rituals are performed in the hope of good luck in the coming year. A few examples follow.

In Spain and other countries with a Spanish heritage, it is traditional to eat *las doce uvas de la suerte* (twelve lucky grapes) at midnight. In the Philippines, it is twelve round fruits that (hopefully) ensure twelve lucky months.

In Germany, the midnight good-luck snack is a pickled herring. Another tradition says that if you eat *kassler* (cured and smoked pork) with sauerkraut, you will never run out of cash.

In England, in olden times, children used to go “apple gifting.” In a tradition based on a similar concept to trick-or-treating at Halloween, they would carry a decorated apple from house to house, offering New Year blessings and receiving small treats in return.

A NEW YEAR RECIPE

Ankerstock (or anchor-stock) was a large loaf of heavy rye bread, sometimes spiced in the manner of gingerbread (hence an alternative name of “New Year gingerbread”), and sometimes with currants added. It was particularly associated with Scotland, Holland, and Germany. The name comes from its supposed resemblance to the stock of a ship’s anchor, or perhaps refers to an old Dutch measure of an *anker* (approximately 10 gallons [38.75 liters]).

Ankerstock or Rye Bread

Requires very little yest [yeast]; mix with the water from two to six ounces of treacle for each pound of flour; let it be strained through a very fine gauze or lawn sieve, as treacle is often adulterated with sand; add salt, caraway, or anise of Verdun; the rye being sweet, the additional sweet gives it a determination, and corrects a disease to which that grain is liable, and makes the bread pleasant, healthy, and nourishing. It is an excellent sea store.

—*Domestic Economy, and Cookery, for Rich and Poor* (London, 1827), by Maria Rundell

DINNER IN A MONASTERY

1493: England

The account rolls of St. Swithun's priory, Winchester, provide a record of the daily expenditure on food, giving us an idea of the diet of the monks and the range of food available at that time. This day in 1493 was a Tuesday, which was not a fast day (a meatless day), and meat seems to have been present in abundance. In addition to plenty of bread and beer the following was provided for the two meals of the day:

	<i>s</i>	<i>d</i>
Moile	7	
180 eggs	1	4
Nombles as entrée		4
Steaks for pittance		3
Beef	3	4

Hordarian's [treasurer's] entrée 3

Moile (*moyle*) has two meanings in medieval texts. It sometimes referred to a pudding, often made in a mold, of ground rice and almond milk, or alternatively it was a dish made from bone marrow and crumbled bread.

Nombles (*numbles*) are the offal or entrails of an animal, and the term also referred to the back and loins of a deer.

IN A DANISH POORHOUSE

1781: Denmark

The English prison reformer John Howard (1726–1790) visited and wrote detailed reports on a large number of prisons and poorhouses in Britain and Europe in the latter decades of the eighteenth century. In his book published in 1784, he described the conditions in the *Almindelige* or “great hospital” in Copenhagen—the word “hospital,” referring to a place where hospitality is offered, not exclusively a place for medical treatment. The *Almindelige* was a poorhouse, at that time accommodating nearly one thousand inmates.

Below is the *Table of Diet, with the Regimen for the Sick*, as signed by the directors and hung up.

Regulations of the price of provisions, settled by the directors, January 1, 1781

- *Sunday*. Soup of pork, beef, or lamb, with carrots, cabbage, or other vegetables according to the season: 1 *pot* for a skilling; 4 *lods* of beef, or 3 *lods* of pork, a skilling.
- [N.B. A *pot* is about an English quart; a skilling, a halfpenny; a *lod*, half an ounce.]

- *Monday.* Grout [gruel] made of *Fehmerjke* grain, three quarters of a pot for a skilling. Iceland dried cod, with sauce and mustard, a skilling.
- *Tuesday.* Pease soup, three quarters of a pot, a skilling. Beef and pork, as on Sunday.
- *Wednesday.* Grout made of buck-wheat and water, three quarters of a pot, a skilling.
- *Thursday.* Coleworts cut small and boiled with beef, pork, &c. one pot for a skilling.
- *Friday.* Gray pease prepared with vinegar and flour, three quarters of a pot, a skilling.
- *Saturday.* As on Monday.

The cook shall also keep and sell to the poor, according to the regulations, bread, beer, butter, cheese, and herrings; also Danish brandy at eighteen skillings a pot, provided that no person purchase more than a skilling's worth in a day.

Regimen for the Sick

- *Sunday* Dinner. Beef, mutton or lamb soup, with roots or greens, and four lods of meat, or instead of meat, a slice of wheaten bread with butter upon it.
- *Monday.* Grout of *Fehmerjke* grain, with butter and sweet milk.
- *Tuesday.* Water-gruel, with sugar and vinegar.
- *Wednesday.* Grout of buck-wheat, with butter and milk.
- *Thursday.* As on Sunday.
- *Friday.* Barley or rice soup, with sugar vinegar and prunes, and a slice of wheaten bread, with butter and beef upon it.
- *Saturday.* As on Monday.

In case the physician or surgeon finds it necessary to change the diet of any patient, the cook must prepare whatever is ordered, provided it does not exceed the value of the usual regimen.—Boiling water, and water-gruel must be always ready night and day.—Patients are allowed no other provisions but the above-mentioned, and are prohibited the use of spirits and strong liquors.—Dinner is at *eleven*, and supper at *six*.

MAMMOTH CHEESE

1802: USA

A mammoth cheese was delivered to President Thomas Jefferson at the White House this day. It was a gift from the people of Cheshire, Massachusetts, and was presented by the Baptist Elder John Leland who had conceived the idea and orchestrated its production.

“The greatest cheese in America for the greatest man in America” was given in thanks for the “singular blessings that have been derived from the numerous services you have rendered to mankind in general.” Leland indicated that the cheese had been produced “by the personal labor of freeborn farmers with the voluntary and cheerful aid of their wives and daughters, without the assistance of a single slave.”

Jefferson wrote of it:

[T]he Mammoth cheese is arrived here and is to be presented this day. it is 4 f 4 ½ I. diameter, 15. I. thick, and weighted in August 1230 lb. They were offered 1000. D. in New York for the use of it 12. days as a shew. it is an ebullition of the passion of republicanism in a state where it has been under heavy persecution.

Jefferson had made it a policy not to accept gifts while in office, and a few days later paid \$200 for the cheese. The ultimate fate of the gift is uncertain. Three years later the remains were reported to be “very far from being good,” but there were rumors of it still being served in 1805, and of the final fragments being dumped in the Potomac at an unspecified date.

FOOD FIRSTS

1856: France

The earliest known mention of fresh green soybeans in the French language occurs in a bulletin of the *Societe d'Acclimatation* on this date: “The soy bean is a species of bean with very long pods which are produced abundantly and are excellent to eat when green.”

FOOD BUSINESS

1937: USA

At a party at the Hormel Mansion in Minnesota, a guest won \$100 for naming a new canned meat—SPAM™. The product was originally called Hormel Spiced Ham when it was developed in 1936, but was not an overwhelming success, and it was hoped that a new name would improve product appeal.

1955: Britain

Luncheon vouchers, redeemable at restaurants, were introduced as an employee benefit.

The concept of employers subsidizing employees' meals was not new but was organized between individual companies and restaurants. After observing the system in action over lunch one day, John Hack and a colleague decided to set up a company which would do all of the organizing, and charge a service fee for doing so. Feeding the workers well was a post-war priority, and the government provided tax breaks and exemption from National Insurance Contributions for the vouchers.

FOOD AND WAR

1918: Britain, World War I

Wartime rationing began on this day, with restrictions on the allowances of sugar, margarine and/or butter, and tea. Sugar could only be obtained by one of two systems. The Household System required registration with a specific grocer who would supply a sugar ticket which had to be shown when sugar was purchased. The Coupon System was for those who did not, or could not, register

under the household system, and who instead had to apply for sugar coupons at the post office.

Also, after this date one meatless day a week was mandated on which no meat, cooked or uncooked, could be sold, and the weekly ration for margarine and/or butter was to be four ounces per head, and tea, one and a half ounces per head.

The purpose of sugar rationing was to ensure fair distribution of supplies and to discourage hoarding, but it also had a significant impact on consumption. The weekly consumption of sugar was 1.49 pounds in 1914, but fell to 0.93 pounds in 1918.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1876: Britain

The “Bass Red Triangle” for Bass Pale Ale was the first British trademark issued under the Trade Mark Registration Act of 1875. An employee of Bass, Ratcliff & Gretton Limited waited overnight outside the registrar’s office in order to be first in the queue.

A bottle of the ale with the logo clearly visible can be seen in Manet’s painting *The Bar at the Folies Bergère*, painted in 1882.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1778: Australia

The First Fleet of British convict ships heading to the new prison colony in Australia was approaching van Diemen’s land (Tasmania) after a voyage of almost eight months. Lieutenant Ralph Clark on the ship *Supply* wrote: “Oh I wish I had never come . . . I am going to sit down to the poorest dinner that ever I sat down to on a New Year’s Day, a piece of hard salt beef and a few musty pancakes.”

1914: Brazil

From Theodore Roosevelt’s *Through the Brazilian Wilderness*:

[W]e were up at five and had a good New Year's Day breakfast of hardtack, ham, sardines, and coffee before setting out on an all day's hunt on foot. I much feared that the pack was almost or quite worthless for jaguars, but there were two or three of the great spotted cats in the neighborhood and it seemed worthwhile to make a try for them any-how.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1661: London, England

Samuel Pepys (1633–1703) was a civil servant working for the British navy who eventually became chief secretary to the Admiralty and a member of Parliament, but he is best known for the personal diary he kept from 1660 to 1669. The diary is one of the most important sources of information about day-to-day life in London in the seventeenth century as well as about major events of the time such as the restoration of King Charles II, the dreadful epidemic of bubonic plague which killed thousands throughout Britain, and the Great Fire of London which ravaged the city in 1666.

Pepys described his New Year meals in his diary entry on this day. He began by entertaining with guests at breakfast.

And I have for them a barrel of oysters, a dish of neat's tongues, and a dish of Anchoves—wine of all sorts, and Northdowne ale. . . . At noon . . . to my cozen Tho. Pepys. . . . Here I saw first his Second wife, which is a very respectful woman. But his dinner a sorry, poor dinner for a man of his estate—there being nothing but ordinary meat in it. . . . That done I left my friends and went to my Lord's, but he being not come in I lodged the money with Mr. Shepley, and bade good night to Mr. Moore, and so returned to Mr. Pierces, and there supped with them, and Mr. Pierce, the purser, and his wife and mine, where we had a calf's head carboned [carbonadoed], but it was raw, we could not eat it, and a good hen. But she is such a slut that I do not love her victuals.

January 2

GRANADA DAY

1492: Spain

This day commemorates the recapture by Catholic forces of the last Moorish stronghold in Spain, the Andalusian city of Granada, in 1492. Battle reenactments are held, and the symbolic food of the day is “Moors and Christians,” a dish of black beans (representing the Moors) and white rice (representing the Christians).

BYRON’S DINNER

1822: Pisa, Italy

The poet Lord Byron (1788–1824) moved to Pisa in November 1821 and took a large house on the *Lung’Arno*. He began to give regular evening dinner parties almost immediately. As far as can be deciphered from the scribbled menu plan given by Doris Langley Moore in *Lord Byron: Accounts Rendered*, the bill of fare the bill of fare for his party on January 2, 1822, was:

- First Course:
 - Thick dark vegetable soup, or herb *soup à la santé*.
 - Fried sweetbreads or cream cheese.
 - *Cotechino col Salgravi* (pork sausage with lentils)
 - A friture—a dish of spinach, and ham.
 - Boiled capons.
 - A beef dish garnished with potatoes
 - A fish stew.
- Second Course:
 - A veal dish—probably a large roast, with some sort of garnish.
 - Two roast capons with sauce.

- Roast woodcocks.
- Baked fish.
- A fricasee of poultry.
- A stew of *latticini tiratti* [some sort of milk or cheese dish]
- Third Course: Dessert.
- Blanched and plain almonds, chestnuts, pears, oranges, and *seleni*.

Byron would quite likely today be diagnosed with an eating disorder. He loved to give dinner parties but disliked seeing women eating. When alone he was very abstemious. He was preoccupied with his weight and frequently went on extremely restrictive diets, as several other entries in this book show (*see November 17, 26, 30*).

LAMPREYS FOR THE KING

1234: England

For many centuries the city of Gloucester supplied lampreys—a much favored eel-like fish in medieval times—to the royal household. The order was originally made in the time of King John but was modified by an order made on this day in 1234 by his son and heir, Henry III.

Concerning the men of Gloucester. The men of Gloucester have made fine with the king by twelve lampreys and twelve bream for 280 lampreys that are exacted from them by summons of the Exchequer to cause them to be quite of the aforesaid 280 lampreys by the aforesaid twelve lampreys and twelve bream.

NOUGAT

1701: France

One *quintal* (about 108 pounds) of white nougat was presented to the Dukes of Burgundy and Berr, the grandsons of King Louis XIV, as they passed through

Montélimar in southeastern France on this day. Nougat is a nutty candy made from egg white sweetened with honey or sugar, and Montélimar is said to be “nougat capital of the world,” although it was not invented there. The word *candy* is derived from the Persian *quand*, meaning sugar, and as the Arab empire expanded across Europe into Spain in the eighth century, Arab people took with them their beloved almond trees and their skill at confectionary making. As it turns out, the almond trees flourished around the area of Montélimar, and the manufacture of nougat (which is very similar to the *halva* of the Middle East and India) was already well established by the time of the visit of the royal princes.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1812: France

The industrialist and amateur botanist Benjamin Delessert (1773–1847) was awarded the *Légion d’Honneur* by Napoleon Bonaparte in recognition of his contribution to the production of sugar from beets. War commonly provides the impetus for technological advantages, and as the Napoleonic wars dragged on, the English blockade of Continental Europe meant that cane sugar from the Caribbean—vital for food preservation at the time—was in short supply. Bonaparte offered substantial incentives for developments that would enable France to be independent of imported sugar.

FOOD AND THE LAW

1953: USA

The United States Agriculture Department (USDA) set new standards for the size of the holes in Swiss cheese on this day. The standard size of the “eyes” was to be half an inch—half the previous size. The standard was revised in 1987 to between 11/16 and 13/16 of an inch in diameter, and again in 2000 when it was determined that the majority of the eyes in Grade A and B cheese should be 3/8 to 13/16 inch in diameter—and as uniform as possible (see **February 22**).

1969: Cuba

Prime Minister Fidel Castro announced that sugar rationing was to be imposed in order to save supplies to meet export obligations. The ration was to be six

pounds per month, per person.

Ironically, Cuba had been the world's major sugar producing country for over a century, and sugar accounted for 80 percent of Cuba's foreign exchange earnings. However, by 1969 the export trade was being impacted by the low international price for sugar, and the local crop was very poor that year. The country's sugar trade deficit to the USSR alone had reached 10 million tons by 1969.

On February 23, 1972, with the harvest predicted to be one of the lowest on record, the ration was reduced to two pounds per person per month.

FOOD AND WAR

1900: South Africa, Boer War

During the second Boer War (1899–1902) the British garrison at Kimberley (in modern-day South Africa) was under siege by Boer forces for 124 days from October 14, 1899, to February 15, 1900. Winifred Heberden recorded the day-to-day events of the siege, which she later published as *Diary of a Doctor's Wife*. On this day she wrote:

Our meat allowance is only a quarter lb a day each, and 2 ozs for children under 12. . . . Vegetables are also divided and sold after the meat. It was amusing to see rich and poor, high and low, standing together. The Secretary of De Beers and his basket jostling a little shoemaker; an ex M.L.A. (Member Legislative Assembly) standing behind a cabby—and so on; but the crowd was mostly composed of women. . . . The sun was frightfully hot from the time it rose, and many poor women who probably had left home without waiting even for a cup of coffee nearly fainted from the long delay. Directly the meat and vegetables were secured and paid for, most people went on to the grocer (who has very little but pickles and sauces left), and there joined another crowd. And so, from shop to shop, Permit Office to Declaration Office, they generally spend the first and hottest part of the day. We all here pray that this hotel will hold out till everything is all right again.

MICROLIVESTOCK

1996: USA

The *Wall Street Journal* on this day reported on “a small energetic group of entomologists, farmers and chefs” who are promoting edible insects, a foodstuff better known in academic circles as “microlivestock.”

The term was coined by Noel D. Vietmeyer in 1985 to refer to small animals of many species such as guinea pigs, rodents, lizards, and insects which “have a promising economic future.”

COLONIAL AMERICAN FOOD

1776: England

Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790), who was living in London at the time, wrote a letter in defence of American breakfasts to the *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*:

VINDEX PATRIAE, a writer in your paper, comforts himself, and the India Company, with the fancy, that the Americans, should they resolve to drink no more tea, can by no means keep that resolution, their Indian corn not affording “an agreeable, or easy digestible breakfast.” Pray let me, an American, inform the gentleman, who seems quite ignorant of the matter, that Indian corn, take it for all in all, is one of the most agreeable and wholesome grains in the world; that its green ears roasted are a delicacy beyond expression; that samp, hominy, succatash, and nokehock, made of it, are so many pleasing varieties; and that a johnny, or hoe-cake, hot from the fire, is better than a Yorkshire muffin—But if Indian corn were as disagreeable and indigestible as the Stamp Act, does he imagine we can get nothing else for breakfast?—Did he never hear that we have oatmeal in plenty, for water-gruel or burgoo; as good wheat, rye, and barley as the world affords, to make frumenty; or toast and ale; that there is everywhere plenty of milk, butter, and cheese; that rice is one of our staple commodities; that for tea, we have sage and bawm in our gardens, the young leaves of the sweet white hickery or walnut, and, above all, the buds of our pine, infinitely preferable to any tea from the Indies; while the islands yield us plenty of coffee and chocolate?—Let the gentleman do us the honour of a visit in America, and I will engage to breakfast him every day in the month with a fresh variety. without offering him either tea or

Indian corn.—As to the Americans using no more of the former, I am not sure they will take such a resolution; but if they do, I fancy they will not lightly break it. I question whether the army proposed to be sent among them, would oblige them to swallow a drop more of tea than they chuse to swallow; for, as the proverb says, though one man may lead a horse to the water, ten can't make him drink. Their resolutions have hitherto been pretty steadily kept. They resolved to wear no more mourning;—and it is now totally out of fashion with near two millions of people; and yet nobody sighs for Norwich crapes, or any other of the expensive, flimsey, rotten, black stuffs and cloths you used to send us for that purpose, with the frippery gauzes, loves, ribbands, gloves, &c.; thereunto belonging.—They resolved last spring to eat no more lamb; and not a joint of lamb has since been seen on any of their tables, throughout a country of 1500 miles extent, but the sweet little creatures are all alive to this day, with the prettiest fleeces on their backs imaginable. Mr. VINDEX's very civil letter will, I dare say, be printed in all our provincial newspapers, from Nova Scotia to Georgia; and together with the other kind, polite, and humane epistles of your correspondents PACIFICUS, TOM HINT, &c.;&c. contribute not a little to strengthen us in every resolution that may be of advantage, to our country at least, if not to yours. HOMESPUN.

JANUARY 3

DINNER WITH THE QUEEN'S GUARD

1899: London, England

Lieutenant Colonel Newnham-Davis (1854–1917) was a military man turned food writer. He was one of the first newspaper restaurant reviewers and had a regular spot in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. He was also the author of several books on dining in London and Europe.

In *Dinners and Dining: Where and How to Dine in London*, he describes a meal at St. James' Palace with the officers of the Queen's Guard. He begins his description of the evening:

“THE best dinner in London, sir!” was what our fathers always added when, with a touch of gratification, they used to tell of having been asked to

dine on the Queen's Guard at St. James's; and nowadays, when the art of dinner-giving has come to be very generally understood, the man who likes good cooking and good company still feels very pleased to be asked to dinner by one of the officers of the guard, for the old renown is still justified, and there is a fascination in the surroundings that is not to be obtained by unlimited money spent in any restaurant.

After describing the room, he goes on to say:

As, on the stroke of eight, on the evening I am writing of; we sat down to dinner my host told me that he had ordered a typical meal for me. This was the menu:—

Potage croûte au pot.

Eperlans à l'Anglaise.

Bouchées a la moëlle.

Côtelettes de mouton. Purée de marrons.

Poularde à la Turque.

Hure truffée. Sauce Cumberland.

Pluviers dorés.

Pommes de terre Anna.

Champignons grillés.

Omelette soufflée.

Huîtres à la Diable

Dinner over, the big sofa is pulled round in front of the fire, and a whist-table and a game of drawing-room cricket each claims its devotees. . . . As

the hands of the clock near eleven, the butler, who has been handing round “pegs” in long tumblers, takes up his position by the door. Military discipline is inexorable, and we (the guests) know that we must be out of the precincts of the guard by eleven o’clock. We say good-night to our hosts, and as we go downstairs we hear the clank of swords being buckled on. . . . Outside in the courtyard a sergeant and a drummer and a man with a lantern are waiting for the officer to go the rounds.

DISCOVERIES AND INVENTIONS

1871: USA

Henry W. Bradley, of Binghamton, New York, was granted Patent No. 110,626 for “a new and Improved Lard or Shortening for Culinary Use.” Bradley did not give his product a name, but it was essentially a form of oleomargarine (or margarine), a butter substitute originally invented by the French chemist Hippolyte Mège-Mouriès in 1868 (*see July 15*).

Bradley’s patent application described the composition of his new product and outlined the method of manufacture.

My lard or shortening is composed of the following ingredients, in about the following proportions to twelve parts in weight: Beef or mutton suet, (tallow,) three parts; refined vegetable or fixed oils, seven parts; hog’s lard (stearine,) two parts = twelve parts. In a suitable vessel or tank I place six parts of water, to which I add the above ingredients—suet, oil, and lard. The mass is then agitated, washed, and heated for one hour by means of steam injected into the vessel or tank through pipes from an ordinary steam-boiler.

1888: USA

Marvin C. Stone of Washington, DC, was granted Patent No. 375,962 for a drinking straw made from rolled paper. His invention was intended to provide “a cheap, durable and unobjectionable substitute for the natural straws commonly used for the administration of medicines, beverages &c.”

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

1574: England

James Bedell of Duxfords, Cambridgeshire, signed his will on this day.

[C]harged two copyhold tenements with the payment of a barrel of white herrings, and two cades of red herrings, to be distributed yearly unto the poverty of both the Duxfords [two villages, in Oxfordshire and Cambridgeshire] by the oversight of the churchwardens, on different days in Lent.

It was not uncommon in those times for bequests to be made to provide bread for the poor of the parish, but the choice of herrings is less usual. It is likely that the intention was to protect the immortal souls of the poor by ensuring they received fish and were therefore less tempted to eat meat during Lent—although this was a rare treat indeed for the lower classes.

Red herrings are salted, smoked herrings. White herrings are fresh fish.

ANNIVERSARY

1916: USA

The actor Betty Furness was born in New York. She is best known for her role in television commercials for Westinghouse products (particularly refrigerators) in the 1940s and 1950s. *The Betty Furness Westinghouse Cook Book* was published in 1954. Here is a recipe from the book for a very fashionable dish in the 1950s—a jellied salad.

Jellied Chicken Salad

- Small mold or 6 individual molds.
- 1 package lemon-flavored gelatin
- ½ cup celery, chopped
- 2 cups chicken stock
- 1½ cups cooked chicken, cut into medium chunks

- ½ cup cooked peas
- Lettuce
- ½ cup raw carrots

Dissolve gelatin in hot chicken stock. Let cool until slightly thickened. Combine the other ingredients and add to the gelatin mixture. Pour into mold or molds. Chill. Serve on lettuce leaf with mayonnaise. Serves 6.

EXPLORERS AND ADVENTURERS

1912: Antarctica

Robert Falcon Scott (1868–1912) led two expeditions to Antarctica, one in 1901–1904 and one in 1910–1913. He and his party reached the South Pole on January 17, 1912, to find that they had been beaten by the group led by the Norwegian Roald Amundsen. Scott and the other four members of his party died on the return journey between March 16 and 29, victims of exhaustion, starvation, and the blizzard conditions.

On this day, his small party was within 150 miles of his goal. “We proceed as a five-man unit tomorrow. We have 5½ units of food—practically over a month’s allowance for five people—it ought to see us through.”

JOURNALS AND LETTERS

1809: USA

Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826) was coming to the end of his second term as president and was planning to retire from public life and return to his home Monticello in Virginia. He wrote from Washington to Edmund Bacon, his overseer at Monticello, inquiring about ice supplies for his icehouse:

If it is now as cold with you as it is here I am in hopes you will be able and ready to fill the icehouse. It would be a real calamity should we not have ice to do it, as it would require double the quantity of fresh meat in summer had we not ice to keep it.

JANUARY 4

A FIRE COMPANY DINNER

1913: Massachusetts, USA

The twenty-third annual dinner for the Whitinsville Fire Company in Massachusetts was held on this day at the Blue Eagle Inn. The menu was:

Blue Points on the Half Shell

Chicken with Rice Consomme patti d'Italie

Boiled Salmon with Egg Sauce

Queen Olives Frizzled Celery

Roast Rhode Island Turkey Brown Gravy

Mashed Potatoes Cranberry Sauce

Hubbard Squash Sweet Pickles

Roast Sirloin of Beef O U Juice

Banana Fritters Lemon Sauce

Chicken Salad Cream Dressing

Parker House Rolls

English Plum Pudding Brandy Sauce

Green Apple Pie Squash Pie

Ice Cream Assorted Cake

Fruit and Nuts Layer Raisins

Cafe Noir

Cigars

Celery, Frizzled

Another and economical way to prepare celery for a side dish to decorate the table. Take only one large head of fine celery. Pare off the green stalks, and cut off the root (reserving it for a delicious and wholesome salad). Cut the stalk lengthwise into four equal branches. Wash them well in cold water, then cut each one into pieces about as long as one's finger; by so doing, all the branches will be separated. With the aid of a small, keen knife pare the thin sides a little, making five or six slits in each piece, starting from the top, downwards, leaving half to three-quarters of an inch uncut; place them in cold water with plenty of ice, leaving them in for two hours. Lift it from the ice-water, artistically dress on a round glass dish, and send to the table. Celery arranged and served in this way makes a beautiful effect on the table, but requires a little patience in its preparation.

—*The Table: How to Buy Food, How to Cook It, and How to Serve It* (New York, 1889), by Allesandro Filippini

HOW TO PRESERVE POTATOES AT SEA

1862: USA

The *Scientific American* of this day contained an article on a subject of considerable interest at the time:

Captain Gilbert Smith of the Barque *Martha Weuzel* has communicated to the *Yarmouth (England) Register* a method by which he succeeded in preserving potatoes at sea during long voyages. When it is well known that vegetables are the best anti-scorbutic medicine this information will be found of great benefit to whaling vessels, and those making long voyages to Australia, the East India and China. To preserve potatoes Captain Smith says, put them into a pen on deck, the door of which must always be kept open in good weather. Scatter over them a quart of air slaked lime to every twenty-five bushels; pick them and rub off the sprouts once every month. Put up and kept in this manner, they will remain good five or six months.

FOOD FIRST

1902: Australia

The Lamington cake is an iconic Australian cake. The first known printed recipe appeared in *The Queenslander* on January 4, 1902.

Lamington Cake

The weight of two eggs in butter, sugar and flour; 2 eggs; ½ tsp baking powder.

Beat the butter to a cream, add the sugar and yolks of eggs, one by one, then the whites beaten stiff, lastly add flour and baking powder. Bake in a moderate oven. When cold cut the cake like a sandwich and put the white mixture between, then cut into small pieces and cover on all sides with the chocolate mixture. Dip the cakes into grated coconut and put in a cool place.

“IF IT’S SAFE, THEN PROVE IT”

1997: Britain

The headline over an article on genetically engineered food which appeared in the *New Scientist* of this day was “If It’s Safe, Then Prove It.”

YOU might think that the faceless bureaucrats of Brussels would occasionally learn that secrecy doesn’t pay. But it seems not. Last week, the European Commission approved for sale in Europe a genetically engineered maize produced in the US. The maize contains genes for herbicide resistance plus a “natural insecticide” gene from the bacterium *Bacillus thuringiensis*.

In principle there is nothing wrong with genetically engineered food, and there may be nothing wrong with this decision. The trouble is that we are not being given all the facts: the Commission based its decision on a set of scientific reports that it will not release to the public.

This is unacceptable. There are good scientific reasons to be concerned about the product. To provide a marker in the engineering process, the geneticists inserted a gene that confers resistance to a commonly used

antibiotic. Unfortunately, they left the gene.

EXPLORERS AND ADVENTURERS

1867: Africa

David Livingstone (1813–1873) was a Scottish missionary and famous African explorer. In 1866 he set off on a final expedition to find the source of the Nile. He died in present-day Zambia in May 1873, without having returned to Britain.

On this day he and his party were moving slowly north in the Upper Loanga (present-day Gabon).

We have neither sugar nor salt, so we have no soluble goods. . . . It is hard fare and scanty. I feel always hungry, and am constantly dreaming of food when I am not sleeping. Savoury viands of former days come vividly before the imagination even in waking hours.

JOURNALS AND LETTERS

1667: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

Anon comes our company. . . . Here I had good room for ten . . . I did make them all gaze to see themselves served so nobly in plate; and a neat dinner ended, though but of seven dishes. Mighty merry I was and made them all—and they mightily pleased . . . and at night to sup and them to cards; and last of all, to have a flagon of Ale and apples, drunk out of a wood Cupp as a Christmas draught, made all merry.

1817: USA

John Pintard (1759–1844) was an American merchant and philanthropist and a New York City alderman. On this day he wrote to his daughter Eliza in New Orleans and described the appetites of some physicians of his acquaintance:

A Doctor Magraw . . . always prescribed old Hock to his patients, a Wine to which our palates are unaccustomed . . . why this wine is sound and good if

when our palates are unaccustomed . . . why the wine is sound and good, if you do not like it, I must prescribe something else. It is a pity however to lose the wine & so he tossed off the contents. Dr Romaine our once family physician was famous for a fondness for plum cake, visited all lying-in ladies, and if he could get in reach of the cake basket would devour the whole. He once annoyed Mama very much. It was a New Year's day. A bountiful Cake Tray graced as usual the side board. Mama was dressing. The Doctor raised the Dutch clean napkin & demolished all the Honey & New Year's cookies & departed covering over the Tray as before, I daresay it contained some pounds. So you see that every physician has his favourite food or liquor.

1821: Ravenna, Italy

The English poet Lord Byron wrote on this day:

I was out of spirits—read the papers, thought what *fame* was, on reading, in a case of murder, that “Mr Wych, grocer, at Tunbridge, sold some bacon, flour, cheese, and, it is believed, some plums, to some gipsy woman accused. He had on his counter (I quote faithfully) a *book*, the Life of *Pamela*, which he was tearing for waste paper, etc., etc. In the cheese was found, etc., and a *leaf* of *Pamela wrapt round the bacon*.” What would Richardson, the vainest and luckiest of living authors (i.e. while alive)—he who, with Aaron Hill, used to prophesy and chuckle over the presumed fall of Fielding (the *prose* Homer of human nature) and of Pope, (the most beautiful of poets)—what would he have said, could he have traced his pages from their place on the French prince's toilets . . . to the grocer's counter and the gipsy-murderess's bacon!!!

JANUARY 5

EPIPHANY EVE

An old tradition of “apple-howling” or “wassailing” used to occur in rural seventeenth-century England on this night. The locals would gather in the orchards around a tree and perform various rites to ensure a good harvest. The tree would be beaten with sticks, toasts would be made to it, much noise would be made, and much fun and cider-drinking went on.

The reason for the beating of the tree with sticks is not certain. It may simply have been an ancient way of invoking or appeasing the spirits, or it may, in fact, have stimulated the tree to spring growth by ridding it of pests harboring in the bark. There is a very old English proverb, first recorded in 1581, with many local variations, which says, "A woman, a dog, and a walnut tree, the more you beat them, the better they be."

A BOER-THEME DINNER

1900: Canada

Dr. L. H. Price of Saint John served as a medical doctor with the 1st Battalion of the Canadian Mounted Rifles during the Boer War. Before he left for South Africa, a dinner was held in his honor at the Hotel American in Moncton, New Brunswick. Several of the items on the menu had given Boer-themed names.

MENU

Oysters on Deep Shell.

Puree of Tomato.

Fried Smelts. Tartar Sauce.

Steamed Turkey, Oyster Dressing.

Westmorland Ham, Sauce Maderia [Madeira].

Sirloin of Beef, with Yorkshire Pudding, Horse Radish Sauce.

Green Goose. Crab Apple Jelly.

Minced Chicken, a la "Joubert." Peaches, a la "Mounted Rifles."

Boer Punch, a la Price.

Mashed Potatoes, Turnips, Green Peas.

Transvaal Pudding, Canadian Sauce.

Lemon Pie. Mince Pie. Black Currant Tart.

Assorted Fruit.

Cheese. Celery.

Coffee.

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“Should Auld Acquaintance Be Forgot?”

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CUTTING OF THE BADDELEY CAKE

1794: London, England

Robert Baddeley (1733–1794) was a one-time cook and valet who became a famous actor of his time. He made a bequest which would provide £3 per annum to the Drury Lane Theatre to provide wine and cake in the “green room” every Twelfth Night. The press at the time of his death noted that

The sum allotted for an annual twelfth-cake is three guineas, expressly to make the future sons and daughters of Thespis remember an old friend and member of the profession over a regale of cake and ale. Thus will Baddeley’s cake and ale float forever down the stream of Time with Dogget’s coat and badge.

The custom continues to this day, although the theater management now foots the bill, three guineas not going so far as it did in providing cake and ale for the cast of an entire show.

There is much confusion as to whether this event was intended to take place on the evening of the fifth or the sixth of January. Strictly speaking, “Twelfth Night” refers to the evening of the fifth of January, as in ancient times the next day began at sunset—the belief being that in the beginning was the dark, and the light and life arose out of this dark. This is the reason that in many places the eve has greater prominence in traditional celebrations than the day itself. This still holds true for many cultures on Christmas Eve and saints’ days in many

countries with a European Catholic heritage.

FOOD FIRSTS

1889: USA

The word *hamburger* first appeared in print in the *Walla Walla Union*, a Washington newspaper, in the phrase “You are asked if you will have porkchopbeefsteakhamandegghamburgersteakorliverandbacon.”

RECIPE FOR THE DAY

1943: USA

George Washington Carver died on this day. He was an African American scientist, botanist, educator, and inventor. The exact day and year of his birth are unknown, but he is believed to have been born in Missouri, as a slave, in the early 1860s.

Carver pioneered the growing of alternative crops, particularly in the South where the soils were impoverished by season after season of cotton and tobacco growing. During his career he published forty-four bulletins on various subjects, and many contained recipes, including those for the peanut, sweet potato, cow-pea, and tomato.

Bulletin No. 31, *How to Grow the Peanut, and 105 Ways of Preparing It for Human Consumption*, published in March 1916, contained several recipes for peanut bread; here is one of them:

No. 11, Aunt Nellie’s Peanut Brown Bread

- 1½ cups white flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1½ cups Graham flour
- 1 teaspoon salt

- 1½ cups blanched and ground peanuts
- ½ cup sweet milk, or just enough to make a soft dough

Mix well together and bake in a moderate oven.

EXPLORERS AND ADVENTURERS

1621: Colonial America

Edward Winslow and William Bradford's reports of the early days of the fledgling Pilgrim settlement in Plymouth were published in England in 1622 as *Mourt's Relation*.

Friday, the 5th of January, one of the sailors found alive upon the shore a herring, which the master had to his supper, which put us in hope of fish, but as yet we had got but one cod; we wanted small hooks.

1771: Batavia (Indonesia)

Joseph Banks (1743–1820) was an English naturalist who accompanied Captain James Cook aboard HMS *Endeavour* on his first voyage of discovery into the South Pacific Ocean (1768–1771). On this day they were at Prince's Island (*Pulo Selan*) off the western end of Java.

Ashore today trading; the Indians dropd their demands very slowly but were very civil, towards noon however they came down to the offerd price, so that before night we had bought up a large quantity of Turtle. In the Evening I went to pay my respects to his majesty the king, who I found at his house in the middle of a rice field cooking his own supper; he receivd me however very politely.

1788: Australia

The First Fleet carrying convicts to the “great southern land” was approaching what would later come to be called Sydney Cove. Arthur Bowes-Smyth, the surgeon aboard the *Lady Penryhn*, wrote in his journal:

A very fine breeze. This night was so very hot that I was oblig'd to throw off the bedcloathes—There are now in the cabin Geraniums in full blossom and some grapevines wh. flourish very much, there are also Myrtles, Bananas and other sort of plant brot from Rio de Janeiro.

JANUARY 6

TWELFTH DAY FEASTS

This day is variously called the Twelfth Day of Christmas, Epiphany, or Three King's Day.

1378: France

Charles V of France gave a state dinner for the Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV of Bohemia.

A feature of important medieval feasts was the presentation of *intermesses* or *intermeats*. The word means “between the plates” and is the source of the more modern word *entremets*. These intermesses represented a break in the meal in which entertainment was provided. Often, a significant part of this presentation was the parading around the hall of a *subtlety*—a large sculpture or diorama intended not solely to entertain but also (and perhaps more importantly) to impress the guests with the wealth (and hence power) of the host or to impart a message of propaganda or religious import. Sometimes these structures were made from food, such as a pastry stag which would bleed wine when shot with an arrow, or sugar sculpture of a saint.

Charles V presented a spectacular intermesse at the feast in 1378.

A ship with masts, sails and rigging was seen first; she had for colours the arms of the city of Jerusalem: Godfrey de Bouillon appeared upon deck, accompanied by several knights armed cap-a-pee: the ship advanced into the middle of the hall, without the machine which moved it being perceptible. Then the city of Jerusalem appeared, with all its towers lined with Saracens. The Ship approached the city: the Christians landed, and began the assault; the besieged made a good defence; several scaling-ladders were thrown down; but at length the city was taken.

—“Staging the First Crusade,” from the *Chronique de Charles V*, MS. fr. 2813, fol. 473v. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

1508: England

The Duke of Buckingham gave a feast at Thornbury for about 460 people, 319 of whom were “strangers”—that is, travelers and visitors that a manorial household was bound by the rules of hospitality to feed and accommodate. The guests included twenty knights of the realm, various clergymen including the Abbot of Keynsham, and a large number of local gentry—all with their personal attendants.

The expenses of the dinner appear in the household book of the estate and show that two extra cooks were hired for the occasion. The food purchased for the dinner included swans, herons, and peacocks; 680 loaves; 260 flagons of ale; 400 eggs; 200 oysters; 12 pigs and 10 sheep; and 36 rounds of beef. The total cost was £7, equivalent to more than a year’s pay for a farm laborer.

1552: England

Sir William Petre was a wealthy diplomat who served four Tudor monarchs. At the “Tweleffe Day Dynner” at his home of Ingatestone Hall, one hundred persons were fed, including a number of “strangers” (i.e., travelers passing by).

A household such as this was virtually self-sufficient. Bread and ale would have been made on the premises from grain grown on the manorial farms. Fowls, eggs, dairy products, herbs, and vegetables such as onions and cabbages were also home grown and did not therefore appear as expenses. Game would have been supplied by the woodlands, and fish were caught locally or bred in ponds or “stews.” The provisions list for the meals on this day shows the major dishes.

Boylde beiffe 9 peces, a pestell & legge of porke, 2 legges of veale, roasting beiffe 6 peces, 3 gesse, a loyne & brest of veale, a pygge, 10 pasteis of beiffe, 2 pasteis of motton, 6 conneis, 4 pasteis of venson, 2 capons, 2 partriches, a woodecoke, 2 teles, a dosen of larkes.

1820: France

The menu for the dinner of King Louis XVIII at the Tuileries on this day was as

THE MENU FOR THE DINNER OF KING LOUIS XVIII AT THE FAYENCES ON THIS DAY WAS AS FOLLOWS:

2 POTAGES

Potage printanier de santé—Bisque d'écrevisses

4 GROSSES PIECES

Faon de daim à la broche

Turbot, sauce aux huîtres—Carpe à la Régence

Casserole au ris à la Saint-Hubert

16 ENTREES

Filets glacés aux laitues—Sautés de filets de perdreaux aux truffes

Grenadins de filets de lapereaux à la Toulouse

Côtelettes de chevreuil à la Soubise

Filets de côtes à la Villeroi, sauce vénitienne

Quenelles de volaille au consommé réduit

Hattelets à la belle-vue à la gelée

Escalopes de levrauts au sang

Poulardes à l'estragon—Cromeskis au velouté

Blanquette de filets de poularde à la Conti

Perches à la Waterfish

Poulets à la reine à la Chivry

Petits pâtés à la béchamel

Filets d'agneaux aux pointes d'asperges

Purée de gibier à la polonaise

4 GROSSES PIECES

Buisson d'écrevisses

Sultane à la Chantilly—Soufflé au fromage

Jambon de sanglier farci

3 PLATS DE ROTS

Faisans de Bohème—Perdreux rouges—Bécasses du Morvan

16 ENTREMETS

Asperges en branches—Choux-fleurs au parmesan

Champignons à la provençale—Truffes au vin de Champagne

Laitues à l'essence—Epinards au consommé

Salade à la piémontaise—Concombres au consommé

Gelée d'oranges

Crème à l'anglaise

Pannequets aux citrons confits

Œufs pochés au jus—Gâteaux soufflés—Macaroni à l'italienne

Pommes au beurre de Vanvres—Gaufres à la flamande

Deux plombières extra

DESSERT

8 corbeilles, 4 corbillons, *etc.*

FOOD AND WAR

1871: France

The city of Paris was under siege by the Prussian army between September 19, 1870, and January 28, 1871. Henry Labouchere kept up a regular correspondence with the English newspaper the *Daily News* throughout the siege, sending his reports by carrier pigeon. They were subsequently published as *The Diary of a Besieged Resident in Paris*.

By early January, many of the animals in the zoo in the *Jardin des Plantes* had already been sacrificed, and it finally came the turn of the famous and much-loved elephants, Castor and Pollux. Labouchere wrote on this day:

The vin ordinaire is giving out. It has already risen nearly 60 per cent in price. This is a very serious thing for the poor, who not only drink it, but warm it and make with bread a soup out of it. Yesterday, I had a slice of Pollux for dinner. Pollux and his brother Castor are two elephants, which have been killed. It was tough, coarse, and oily, and I do not recommend English families to eat elephant as long as they can get beef or mutton. Many of the restaurants are closed owing to want of fuel. They are recommended to use lamps; but although French cooks can do wonders with very poor materials, when they are called upon to cook an elephant with a spirit lamp the thing is almost beyond their ingenuity. Castor and Pollux's trunks sold for 45fr. a lb.; the other parts of the interesting twins fetched about 10fr. a lb

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1668: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

Twelwe day. . . . By and by to my house for a very good supper . . . and after supper to dancing and singing till about 12 at night; and then we had a good sack-posset for them and an excellent Cake, cost me near 20s, of our Jane's making, which was cut into twenty pieces, there being by that time so many of our company.

For *sack posset*, see **February 13**.

1660: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys. He was annoyed to be served a pasty supposedly containing venison but which was clearly a fraud.

From thence I went to my office, where we paid money to the soldiers till one o'clock, at which time we made an end, and I went home and took my wife and went to my cosen, Thomas Pepys, and found them just sat down to dinner, which was very good; only the venison pasty was palpable beef, which was not handsome.

1763: London, England

James Boswell (1740–1795) was a Scottish laird, lawyer, and diarist. He is best known as the biographer of famous English writer and lexicographer Samuel Johnson (1709–1784). At this time Boswell was in London and interested in English ways.

My brother breakfasted with me. This was Twelfth-day, on which a great deal of jollity goes on in England, at the eating of the Twelfth-cake all sugared over. . . . I took a whim that between St Pauls and the Exchange and back, taking different sides of the street, I would eat a penny Twelfth-cake at every shop where I could get it. This I performed most faithfully.

EXPLORERS AND ADVENTURERS

1860: Australia

John McDouall Stuart (1815–1866) was a Scottish explorer who made a total of six expeditions into the inland of the Australian continent during the years 1858–1862, during which “he fixed the center of the continent and successfully crossed it from sea to sea.” On this day, during his third expedition, he wrote:

As my rations are now drawing to a close (for we started with provisions only for three months, and have been out now for three months and more), I must sound a retreat to get another supply at Chambers Creek. It was my intention to have sent two men down for them, but I am sorry to say that I

intention to have sent two men down for them, but I am sorry to say that I have lost confidence in all except Kekwick. I cannot trust them to be sent far, nor dare I leave them with our equipment and horses while Kekwick and I go for the provisions.

TWELFTH CAKE

Twelfth Night cakes were well known long before recipes for them appeared in print. Before the development of baking powders in the nineteenth century, “cakes” were made from a basic yeast-risen bread dough which was sweetened, enriched with eggs or cream, and studded with dried fruits.

This is an early (perhaps the first) printed recipe bearing the title “Twelfth Night Cake.”

Twelfth Cake

Take seven pounds of flour, make a cavity in the centre, set a sponge with a gill and a half of yeast and a little warm milk; then put round it one pound of fresh butter broke into small lumps, one pound and a quarter of sifted sugar, four pounds and a half of currants washed and picked, half an ounce of sifted cinnamon, a quarter of an ounce of pounded cloves, mace, and nutmeg mixed, sliced candied orange or lemon peel and citron. When the sponge is risen, mix all the ingredients together with a little warm milk; let the hoops be well papered and buttered, then fill them with the mixture and bake them, and when nearly cold ice them over with sugar prepared for that purpose as per receipt; or they may be plain.

—*The Art of Cookery* (London, 1803), by John Mollard

JANUARY 7

JINJITSU NO SEKKU

Japan

Jinjitsu No Sekku is a Japanese spring festival. It has been celebrated on this day since 1872, when Japan officially adopted the solar calendar. It is also known as

Seven Herb Festival, from the custom of eating *nanakusa-gayu* (literally “seven herbs rice gruel”) to ensure good luck for the coming year.

This is how the Englishman Sir Francis Taylor Piggott described the preparation of the special *congee* (rice gruel) in *The Garden of Japan* (1896):

To-day is the domestic festival of the “seven herbs” . . . one of those old-time ceremonies which abounded in Japan, but which are fast passing out of memory. The master of the house, rising betimes, and robed appropriately, proceeded to the kitchen; and there, in the presence of his servants, he took an equal quantity of each of seven herbs, which he chopped up fine. The herbs were then boiled in a species of rice gruel, and served for breakfast to all the household, with an ordered ceremonial that only the Japanese mind could conceive.

MYCOPROTEIN TO THE RESCUE

2002: Britain

The British Company Marlow Foods’ mycoprotein (protein derived from fungus) was certified as being generally recognized as safe (GRAS) for human consumption by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

In the 1960s there was a widespread belief that global population growth was about to outstrip food supply, and an intensive search for nutrient-dense alternative foods began. In 1967, a fungus (actually a mold) called *Fusarium venenatum* was found in the town of Marlow in Buckinghamshire, England. It was believed that this organism could be exploited as a potentially rich source of mycoprotein. In 1985, the mycoprotein was approved by the British Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Food (MAFF) to be marketed as food for humans.

Quorn is the trademarked, commercial form of this particular mycoprotein. It is described on packaging as a “textured vegetable protein” and is promoted as a meat substitute. The first Quorn product was a savory pie, and it appeared on the shelves of the English supermarket chain Sainsbury’s in 1985.

The Quorn trademark (No. 3930638) was registered in the United States on March 15, 2011.

NESTING FOOD

2010: USA

Lee Golani, of Fort Wayne, Indiana, was granted Patent No. 2010 0003372 for a “Device and Method for Nesting Food Products.” The patent is, perhaps, an example of the creative impulse in action for its own sake rather than in the service of solving a problem. The patentee gave his explanation for the product:

People love to eat such foods as buffalo wings whether it has been fried, baked, or even bar-b-qued. People love to eat shrimp in the same manner. The only thing missing is to have both buffalo wings and shrimp as a single unit. If the buffalo wings and shrimp were one entity, considered a new food, it can also be prepared by frying, baking, and even bar-b-queing and people can have the best of both.

COOKERY BOOKS

1896: USA

The *Boston Cooking-School Cook Book*, by Fannie Merritt Farmer, was published on this day. The publishers were not confident of its salability, and the initial print run of only 3,000 copies was done at the author’s expense. The book, however, quickly became a best-seller and is still considered a classic text.

In her preface the author says:

It is my wish that it may not only be looked upon as a compilation of tried and tested recipes, but that it may awaken an interest through its condensed scientific knowledge which will lead to deeper thought and broader study of what to eat.

A significant part of the book’s appeal to housewives was that the scientific rationale for instructions was given and that measurements were standardized. Earlier cookery books commonly used phrases such as “sufficient flour” or “a nut of butter” or asked for a spoonful or cupful of something, without specifying what size spoon or cup. Farmer also stressed that measures must be level and explained how this could be accurately done. As a result she became known as “the mother of level measurement ”

Measuring Ingredients. Flour, meal, powdered and confectioners' sugar, and soda should be sifted before measuring. Mustard and baking-powder, from standing in boxes, settle, therefore should be stirred to lighten; salt frequently lumps, and these lumps should be broken. A cupful is measured level. To measure a cupful, put in the ingredient by spoonfuls or from a scoop, round slightly, and level with a case knife, care being taken not to shake the cup. A tablespoonful is measured level. A teaspoonful is measured level.

FOOD FIRSTS

1316: Italy

Maria Borgogno was noted as a “lasagne maker” in a rental agreement for her house, drawn up by a notary on this day. This is the first known written mention of lasagna.

1896: USA

The first known published recipe for “brownies” appears in Fannie Merritt Farmer’s *The Boston Cooking-School Cook Book*, published on this day in 1896. The small cakes are brown from the inclusion of molasses—chocolate did not appear as an ingredient in brownies until about 1904.

Brownies

- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup butter.
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup powdered sugar.
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup Porto Rico molasses.
- 1 egg well beaten.
- $\frac{7}{8}$ cup bread flour.
- 1 cup pecan meat cut in pieces.

Mix ingredients in order given. Bake in small, shallow fancy cake tins, garnishing top of each cake with one-half pecan.

EXPLORERS AND ADVENTURERS

1841: Australia

Edward John Eyre (1815–1901) was an English explorer and colonial administrator who led several expeditions into the inland of Central Australia. In 1840–1841 he and the remaining other member of his five-man party, a young Aboriginal man called Wylie, completed a two-thousand-mile journey around the coastline of the Great Australian Bight and the Nullabor Plain.

On this day he and his party came across a small group of Aboriginals.

Finding that we did not wish to injure them, they became friendly in their manner, and offered us some fruit, of which they had a few quarts on a piece of bark. This fruit grows upon a low brambly-looking bush, upon the sand-hills or in the flats, where the soil is of a saline nature. It is found also in the plains bordering upon the lower parts of the Murrumbidgee, but in much greater abundance along the whole line of coast to the westward. The berry is oblong, about the shape and size of an English sloe, is very pulpy and juicy, and has a small pyramidal stone in the centre, which is very hard and somewhat indented. When ripe it is a dark purple, a clear red, or a bright yellow, for there are varieties. The purple is the best flavoured, but all are somewhat saline in taste. To the natives these berries are an important article of food at this season of the year, and to obtain them and the fruit of the mesembryanthemum, they go to a great distance, and far away from water. In eating the berries, the natives make use of them whole, never taking the trouble to get rid of the stones, nor do they seem to experience any ill results from so doing.

1845: Australia

Ludwig Leichhardt (1813–1848) was a Prussian naturalist who extensively explored northern and central Australia in 1844–1845.

I travelled farther down the river, and again came, after a ride of three miles, into a well-watered country, but still occupied by scrub; in which the

Capparis, with its large white sweet-scented blossoms, was very frequent; but its sepals, petals, and stamens dropped off at the slightest touch. Its fruit was like a small apple covered with warts, and its pungent seeds were imbedded in a yellow pulp, not at all disagreeable to eat.

The fruit Leichhardt refers to is *Capparis arborea*, known as the native caper or scrambling caper, an inhabitant of the eastern coastal rainforests. The plant has a distinctive white flower with long stamens, and the fruit is sweet and tasty when ripe.

1835: Chile

Charles Darwin (1809–1882) was an English naturalist who developed the theory that evolution occurred through a process of natural selection. In 1831 he was invited to join HMS *Beagle* as a self-funded “gentleman scientist” on its planned two-year expedition to chart the coastline of the South American continent. The voyage lasted almost five years during which Darwin minutely recorded his observations, wrote detailed letters to scientist colleagues, and collected natural history specimens.

At this time they were in the Chonos Archipelago, where he noted the wild potatoes:

Having run up the coast, we anchored near the northern end of the Chonos Archipelago, in Low’s Harbour, where we remained a week. . . . The wild potato grows on these islands in great abundance, on the sandy, shelly soil near the sea-beach. The tallest plant was four feet in height. The tubers were generally small, but I found one, of an oval shape, two inches in diameter: they resembled in every respect, and had the same smell as English potatoes; but when boiled they shrunk much, and were watery and insipid, without any bitter taste. They are undoubtedly here indigenous.

JOURNALS AND LETTERS

1783: Norfolk, England

James Woodforde (1740–1803) was an English clergyman and vicar of the parish of Weston-Longville in Norfolk, England, from 1776 until his death. For almost forty-five years he kept a diary which provides a marvelous glimpse into

almost forty-five years he kept a diary which provides a marvelous glimpse into middle-class country life in England in the second half of the eighteenth century.

[W]ent by appointment to Mr. Priests and there dined, supped and spent the Evening. . . . We had for Dinner some fresh Salmon and Oyster Sauce, a boiled Turkey and Oyster Sauce, a fore Qr. of London Lamb, mince Pyes, &c. . . . We did not sup till near 10 at night—and then we had a very handsome supper—A Couple of boiled Fowls and Oyster Sauce, a roasted Hare which. I sent them—one Duck roasted, a hot Tongue, Tarts, Italian Flummery—Blamanche, black Caps, and Sweetmeats. I did not get to bed till after 12 tonight.

Blamanche is *blancmange*, which translates as “white food.” In medieval times this was an elegant dish of shredded chicken mixed with boiled rice, almonds, a little sugar, and sometimes cream or eggs. Over the ensuing centuries the nature of the dish changed significantly and at any one time there were a number of quite different dishes called by the same name. What most of them had in common by Woodforde’s time was that they were molded dishes set with isinglass or calf’s foot jelly. Several variations of the dish appear in *The London Art of Cookery* by John Farley, which was published in the same year as Woodforde’s diary entry. This is one of them:

BlancMange

Take a quart of water, put into it an ounce of isinglass, and let it bile till it be reduced to a pint. Then put in the whites of four eggs, with two spoonfuls of rice-water to keep the eggs from poaching, and sugar it to your taste. Run it through a jelly bag, then put to it two ounces of sweet and one ounce of bitter almonds. Give them a scald in your jelly, and put them through a hair sieve. Then put into a China bowl, and the next day turn it out, and stick it all over with almonds blanched and cut lengthways, and garnish with flowers or green leaves.

Isinglass is a relatively pure form of gelatin obtained from the swim bladders of some types of fish.

Black caps are a type of baked apple, presumably so called because of the caramelization of the sugary topping in the hot oven. Here is a recipe from Woodforde’s time:

To make Black Caps

Cut twelve large apples in halves, and take out the cores, place them on a thin patty-pan, or mazareen, as close together as they can lie, with the flat side downwards; squeeze a lemon in two spoonfuls of orange-flower water, and pour over them; shred some lemon-peel fine, and throw over them, and grate fine sugar all over them. Set them in a quick oven, and half an hour will do them. When you send them to table, throw fine sugar all over the dish.

—*The Art of Cookery, Made Plain and Easy* (1774), by Hannah Glasse

JANUARY 8

WORKHOUSE FOOD

1847: Ireland

A report was sent to a British Parliamentary commission on the conditions in the Castlebar workhouse.

I beg leave most respectfully to submit, for the consideration of the Lord-Lieutenant, the state of the poorhouse of this Union. . . . I am a frequent visitor of the workhouse; after inspecting each class of the inmates, and I am pained to have to state that almost every individual of the 100 or more are showing striking signs of haggard and famished looks; the provisions, oaten or Indian meal, is supplied very irregularly, often not sent to the house until an advanced hour of the day, in quantities of 200 lbs. or so, but never in a large or satisfactory supply. Turf [for fuel] is most irregularly supplied; on many days not all sent, the cause of having the breakfast meal deferred to one or two o'clock, p.m. On New Year's Day the paupers had only one diet [meal], and that at a late hour.

FOOD AND WAR

1940: Britain, World War II

Wartime rationing began. The first foods rationed were sugar (12 ounces per

week), butter (4 ounces), and bacon (4 ounces). The specific foods on the list and the quantity of each allowed fluctuated over time, but rationing in some form or another did not end in Britain until July 4, 1954, fourteen years after it began and nine years after the end of the war.

There were several forms of rationing in operation during the war. Some foods were restricted by weight, but meat was rationed on the basis of cost (see **March 11**). A points system was later applied to other foods such as canned and dried foods, cereals, and pulses. A few foods disappeared completely during the war years—bananas being the best-known and most-missed item (see **December 30**).

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A page from Winston Churchill's ration book. All food imported into England was government property and was distributed through an effective rationing plan.

(Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, [Reproduction number e.g., LC-USE6-D-009997])

1814: Red River Colony (now Manitoba), Canada, Pemmican War

The Pemmican War is the name given to a seven-year feud between the Hudson Bay Company and the North-West Company. As with so many similar conflicts, the war was not *about* pemmican per se, but the name came from the triggering incident.

The two fur-trading companies had been fierce rivals for years, but rivalry turned to hostility after Miles MacDonell, the governor of the Red River Colony, signed the Pemmican Proclamation on January 8, 1814. The proclamation was meant to ensure adequate provisions remained in the colony for the settlers expected in the following summer. It stated that

[n]o persons whatsoever shall take any provisions, either flesh, fish or vegetables procured or raised within the said Territory, without a license from the Governor, and whosoever shall be detected in attempting to convey shall be taken into custody and prosecuted as the law in such case directs.

MacDonell also confiscated four hundred bags of pemmican belonging to the North-West Company and ordered its trading posts closed.

In essence, the North-West Company, and the local Métis people who supplied them with pemmican, declared war on the Hudson Bay Company and the settlement, and there followed seven years of conflict which only ended when the British Crown forced the two companies to combine.

1900: South Africa, Boer War

From *The Diary of a Doctor's Wife* during the siege of Kimberley, by Winifred Heberden:

Today we had horse-flesh for the first time, and very excellent it was, though many people foolishly refused even to taste it. The proportion served out was one third horsemeat and the rest ox-meat. There are said to be still about 700 head of cattle, but as forage is running very short and must be kept for the mounting of the troops, it was thought better to kill a

few spare horses while they are still in good condition. Eggs are now 7/- to 10/- a dozen, but all other foods are regulated in price. All Mr Rhodes's fowls and ducks and eggs are sent to the Hospital; and most of his fruit from Kenilworth, where peaches and grapes are now ripening fast.

DISCOVERIES AND INVENTIONS

1798: USA

The first American patent for a coffee grinder was granted to Thomas Bruff Sr. Patent number X000198 was for a wall-mounted mill, and the coffee was ground between two toothed nuts about three inches across.

EXPLORERS AND ADVENTURERS

1812: USA

Wilson Price Hunt (1783–1842) led an expedition from St. Louis to the mouth of the Columbia River by a new route across the Rocky Mountains in 1811–1812. There were fifty-six people in the party.

[O]n the 8th we found a village of Sciatogas and Tushepahs made up of thirty-four tepees. They had at least two thousand horses. Their tepees are made of matting. They are clothed in good robes of buffalo or deerskin; they have deerskin shirts and leggings and in every respect their clothing is as good as any of the best-provided Indian peoples. In their homes they have kettles and copper pots, as well as other things that suggest some intercourse with the inhabitants along the seacoast. They have some axes, too, and a skillfully wrought stone hammer that they use to pound roots, cherries, and other fruits, as well as fish. Pointed pieces of elkhorn serve in lieu of wedges to split wood. Women have willow-twig hats very neatly made and decorated. Their water containers are also made of willow, and in these they cook their meat by putting red-hot stones from the fire into them. However, copper kettles are preferred, three or four of them usually hanging in their tepees. (15 miles west)

I cannot thank Providence enough for our having reached this point, for we were excessively tired and weak. We had only two horses left, both no more than skin and bones. That night we dined on some rather poor deer

MORE THAN SKIN AND BONES. THAT NIGHT WE DINED ON SOME TANNED POOR DEER MEAT AND SOME ROOTS.

1898: Ethiopia

Alexander Bulatovich (1870–1919) went to Ethiopia in 1896 as a member of the Russian Red Cross and became a confidante and military aid to Menelik II, who was at war with Italy as well as with elements within his own country. He later wrote of his exploits in *With the Armies of Menelik: A Journal of an Expedition from Ethiopia to Lake Rudolf*.

In former times, the food of the Kaffa consisted of meat, milk, and porridge made of the seeds of various bread-grain plants. Nowadays, they eat almost exclusively bread made from the roots of a banana-like tree (that same *musa enset*), since that is the only food stuff they can obtain after the general destruction.

This bread is prepared in the following manner: once a tree has attained four years of growth, they dig it up and strip off the leaves; then they bury the thick lower part of the trunk in the ground and leave it there for several months. After this time, it begins to rot and turn sour. Then they extract the buried tree from the ground, clean off the spoiled outer layer, and scrape and grind the part which has turned sour and soft. Then they bake it in large earthenware pans. This bread is not very nutritious. It is unsavory and has an unpleasant sour smell. If you add flour to it, then the bread is somewhat improved.

As a supplement to this food, they serve various roots, cooked in water, and also coffee, which they drink several times a day, up until and after eating. They boil coffee in earthenware vessels and pour it out into little cups made of ox horn.

The plant to which Bulatovich refers is *Ensete ventricosum*, commonly called the false banana. It is a vital staple in Ethiopia, where it is described as “the tree against hunger.”

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1778: England

Gilbert White (1720–1793) was an English cleric and naturalist whose home was Selborne in Hampshire. In a letter he wrote on this day he theorized on the role of diet in leprosy, and he also talked about the potato, which at that time was only slowly gaining acceptance in the country—and then primarily as a food for the poor.

To The Honourable Daines Barrington,

In all ages the leprosy has made dreadful havoc among mankind. . . . how nearly this pest is eradicated. . . . This happy change perhaps may have originated and been continued from the much smaller quantity of salted meat and fish now eaten in these kingdoms; from the use of linen next the skin; from the plenty of better bread; and from the profusion of fruits, roots, legumes, and greens, so common in every family. . . . Three or four centuries ago, before there were any enclosures, sown-grasses, field-turnips, or field-carrots, or hay, all the cattle which had grown fat in summer, and were not killed for winter-use, were turned out soon after Michaelmas to shift as they could through the dead months; so that no fresh meat could be had in winter or spring. . . . But agriculture is now arrived at such a pitch of perfection, that our best and fattest meats are killed in the winter; and no man need eat salted flesh, unless he prefers it, that has money to buy fresh. . . . One cause of this distemper might be, no doubt, the quantity of wretched fresh and salt fish consumed by the commonalty at all seasons as well as in Lent; which our poor now would hardly be persuaded to touch.

. . . Potatoes have prevailed in this little district, by means of premiums, within these twenty years only; and are much esteemed here now by the poor, who would scarce have ventured to taste them in the last reign.

JANUARY 9

DINNER AT THE CANTON HOTEL

1910: Canton, China

The dinner menu at the Canton Hotel on this night had the typical form of an Oriental hotel catering for English or American guests. The items are numbered to avoid confusion or embarrassment due to language difficulties.

DINNER BILL OF FARE

1. Mushroom Soup
2. Boiled Fish
3. Duck Liver on Toast
4. Ox-Tongue Petits Pois
5. Roast Chicken
6. Cold York Ham
7. Potatoes
8. Beans
9. Kamlo Curry and Rice
10. Taspv Cake
11. Fried Pudding
12. CHEESE
13. DESSERT
14. COFFEE
15. COCOA
16. OO LUNG TEA
17. HUNG MUEY TEA
18. MILK SUGAR
19. BUTTER
20. BREAD

21. JAM

22. PICKLES

23. GOLDEN SYRUP

- \$1.00 PER PERSON

FOOD & WAR

1865: USA, American Civil War

Captain Robert Emory Park of the Twelfth Alabama Regiment kept a diary during his years as a Confederate officer and prisoner of war (POW). At the battle of Winchester on September 19, 1864, he was wounded and taken prisoner. By this date he had been transferred to the Old Capitol Prison in Washington, DC, where he wrote:

Our bill of fare consists of bread and tea for breakfast and a small piece of pork and beans and bean soup in a tin cup with one third of a loaf of bread for dinner. Sometimes beef and beef soup is furnished in lieu of pork and bean soup for dinner. Some of my roommates have received money from friends and buy cheese, crackers and apples from the sutler. His prices are exorbitant.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1861: Australia

From the journal of John McDouall Stuart (1815–1866) during his fifth expedition. In his journal entry on this day he says:

Louden Spa. I am obliged to leave two horses. I thought that I should have been able to have got them down as far as Mr. Levi's station. There are three others that I must leave behind; they are now nearly useless to me, and cause more delay than I can afford. I shall reduce my party to ten individuals, in order to lighten the horses that I take with me. I shall take thirty weeks' provisions; the rest I shall leave there (Mr Levi's station). The

two men who are to return are to have a month's provisions to carry them down. They will be here two weeks, and if the horses have not recovered by that time, they will remain another week, when they will have one week's provisions to take them to Chambers Creek, where they will get enough to carry them to the mine.

FOOD & THE LAW

1735: America

The first state-wide prohibition law was enacted in Trustee Georgia—the name given to the British colony during its first two decades. The enactment of the law was triggered by an incident in Savannah in which several lives were lost. James Oglethorpe, the founder of the colony, attributed the loss of life to the excessive consumption of rum. Rum had been blamed for many of the problems in the new colony for some time, in spite of an ordinance prohibiting its use being in place since 1733. The new act formalized and reinforced this prohibition.

The act prohibited the importation or sale of rum, brandy, or “or any other kind of Spirits or Strong Waters by whatsoever Name they are or may be distinguished.” As with many such attempts by lawmakers to modify the consumption habits of the citizens, the act was impossible to enforce and was abandoned in 1742.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1920: Italy

The writer D. H. Lawrence wrote to his friends Sallie and Willie Hopkins from Naples on this day: “Frieda came down to Florence about a month ago: a bit thinner for her vegetarianism, but very well: had enjoyed Baden-Baden. Everything is very short there—no fat, no milk, practically no meat, no coal. I must have some things sent from England.”

JANUARY 10

POLICE DIET SQUAD

1917: USA

The Police Diet Squad was made up of volunteer “rookies” who had agreed to take part in a dietary trial run in 1917 by the test food experiment station of the Life Extension Institute at 49 Lafayette Street. The experiment was designed to prove that it was possible to eat a nutritious diet at a very low cost. The men were weighed and had medical checks at regular intervals.

The squad was joined by Commissioner Wood at luncheon on this day, at which the group was addressed by Professor Irving Fisher, an economist at Yale University: “We don’t know how to eat, we don’t know how to live. We have been drifting for generations, and our eating habits and our other customs are largely matters of accident, of imitation, not of science or wise judgement.”

Breakfast for the Diet Squad cost 6 ½ cents per man and consisted of oatmeal, toast, and tea, with milk and sugar in tea and oatmeal, representing 850 calories. Luncheon cost 7 cents, consisting of pea soup, croutons, nut butter, raisin bread, and sugar and milk for tea, amounting to 1,088 calories. Dinner cost 11 cents for stuffed roast heart of beef, whole wheat bread, nut butter, and cornstarch pudding, with milk and sugar for tea and pudding, coming to 1,195 calories.



Police Diet Squad

(Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, [Reproduction number e.g., LC-DIG-ggbain-23542])

FOOD FIRSTS

1839: Britain

Indian tea was offered at auction for the first time by the East India Company. Tea was first planted in India in 1835, and as a product of the British Empire it was soon much cheaper than tea imported from China. The greater affordability of tea from this time was a crucial step in it rapidly becoming the national drink.

The *Gardener's Gazette* of this date noted:

The commercial sale-room in Mincing-lane, where the public tea sales are held, was crowded at ten, the hour of the sale, this morning, in consequence of its being known that the whole of the Honorable Company's recent importations of teas from their territories in Upper Assam, India, were to be sold. . . . without the least reservation, to the highest bidder. We never before witnessed such excitement as prevailed when the first lot was competed for.

After some vigorous bidding all eight chests of tea—three of Souchong and five of Assam Pekoe—sold for the between 16 shillings and “the extraordinary high price” of 34 shillings a pound. All were purchased by Captain Pidding, a well-known London tea merchant.

The *Gazette* continued:

Captain Pidding intends to allow small parcels of it to be sold at prime cost. If this tea proves as good as that from China, we shall be enabled to employ hundreds of thousands of our own colonists in our own Indian territory, instead of depending on the Chinese; and the constant intercourse and increased number of persons employed in our own immediate interests, will greatly strengthen our hold on the British territories in the East. Captain Pidding has asserted that nobody shall have more than a single ounce packet, which will enable the greater number to taste and give opinions on the quality of the article.

THE STRAWBERRY

1814: Britain

Michael Keens wrote a letter on this day to the Horticultural Society about his

work in developing a variety of strawberry suitable for cultivation. The letter was read at a meeting of the Society on February 1, 1814.

Having been for many years eager in the pursuit of everything connected with Horticulture, which is also my occupation, the desire of communicating whatever may have occurred in a long practice, apparently beneficial to society in general, urges me to trouble you with a few lines on the subject of a new Strawberry, different specimens of which I had the honour of exhibiting to the Horticultural Society last season. . . .

Having frequently, in the course of many years practice, observed the deterioration of several kinds of fruit, when propagated in the usual ways of slips, buds, cuttings, scions, or division of the parent root, I have for a considerable time employed myself in raising new varieties from seed, which has been not only a source of great amusement to me, but also very profitable in my profession.

About the year 1806 I raised, as usual, a great many Strawberries from seed; and the seed I sowed at that time was that of the large white Chili Strawberry. The produce of a numerous progeny, thus obtained, was in general white, and by no means well-flavoured; one, however, among them which is the subject of this letter, attracted my notice, as very different from, and far superior to all its companions; and the next year it fully justified the preference I had given it. . . . The shape of the fruit is round, like its parent, the Chili Strawberry; and its colour being of a very fine deep crimson, gives a richness to its appearance, far above that of any other Strawberry. The seeds project considerably and defend it from bruises, which preserves the fine bloom upon the fruit, and renders it by far the most portable, as it is the most beautiful fruit of its kind.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1887: USA

President Rutherford B. Hayes (1822–1893) was a staunch temperance advocate, and his wife Lucy was even more ardent in the cause. When Hayes was elected as the nineteenth president of the United States in 1877, a strict no-alcohol policy for the White House was immediately put in place: “It seemed to me, that the example of excluding liquors from the White House would be wise and

useful, and would be approved by good people generally. I knew it would be particularly gratifying to Mrs Hayes to have it done.”

The policy was not popular among the political and diplomatic elite and was the cause of many witty comments. Secretary Evarts was reported to say after one function that “It was a brilliant affair; the water flowed like champagne,” and Republican representative Garfield described another state dinner as going down “with coffee and cold water.”

The journalist Benjamin Perly Poore, in his *Reminiscences* (1886), reported that at one function

The table groaned with delicacies; there were many devices of the confectioner which called forth admiration. Many wondered why oranges seemed to be altogether preferred, and the waiters were kept busy replenishing salvers upon which the tropical fruit lay. Glances telegraphed to one another that the missing link was found, and that, concealed within the oranges, was delicious frozen punch, a large ingredient of which was strong old Santa Croix rum. Thenceforth (without the knowledge of Mrs Hayes, of course) Roman punch was served about the middle of the state dinners, care being taken to give the glasses containing the strongest mixture to those who were longing for some potent beverage. This phase of the dinner was named by those who enjoyed it “the Life-Saving Station.”

President Hayes had the last word on the subject, however. In his diary on January 10, 1887, he wrote:

Also received, and read parts of, the second volume of Ben Perley Poore’s “Reminiscences.” In the main, fair to Lucy and myself. The joke of the Roman punch oranges was not on us but on the drinking people. My orders were to flavor them rather strongly with the same flavour that is found in Jamaica rum. This took! There was not a drop of spirits in them! This was certainly the case after the facts alluded to reached our ears. It was Refreshing to hear “the drinkers” say with a smack of the lips, “would they were hot!”

Roman Punch

Make two quarts of lemonade, rich with pure juice lemon fruit; add one tablespoonful of extract of lemon. Work well, and freeze; just before

serving, add for each quart of ice half a pint of brandy and half a pint of Jamaica rum. Mix well and serve in high glasses, as this makes what is called a semi or half-ice. It is usually served at dinners as a coup de milieu.

—*The White House Cookbook* (1887), by F. L. Gillette

FOOD & THE LAW

2002: Europe

Sauce or vegetable? The British newspaper the *Daily Telegraph* reported on an important decision to be made on this day by the European Economic Union.

Officials of the European Union will meet behind closed doors today to rule whether a lumpy sauce is, legally speaking, a vegetable. An obscure panel of technocrats, known as the “Nomenclature” sub-group of the Customs Code Committee, will decide how many lumps are admissible in a tin of Baxter’s creamy mushroom or Dolmio pasta sauce before these products turn into vegetables, losing their tariff privileges as sauces. At present, a sauce containing more than 20 per cent in lumps is classified as a vegetable, even if the lumps are fruit. . . . Strict tests are carried out in laboratories, using metal wire sieves with an aperture of five millimetres. The lumps are then rinsed in warm water. If they remain lumps, the sauce is a vegetable. . . . The EU has now offered to raise the “lump threshold” to 30 per cent but the food industry is demanding that the whole scheme be scrapped.

SOYER’S FIELD OVEN

1856: Crimean Peninsula, Ukraine, Crimean War

The famous chef Alexis Soyer went to Crimea to assist his friend Florence Nightingale to better feed the troops as well as the patients in the hospital at Scutari. He wrote regularly to the editor of *The Times* during his time there, and the following letter was published on this day.

[Y]our Crimean correspondent, . . . very justly remarks in relation to my stoves that they would be more valuable if they bake and roast, as well as boil and stew. This they will do after a time, . . . The Crimean ones will do exactly the same, but to avoid confusion I only make use of one apparatus,

in which stewing and boiling can be easily carried out by the soldiers with their rations, and my receipts, several of which you have honoured me by giving publicity to in your valuable columns; and the bill of fare, I assure you, is quite sufficient for the present to gratify the palates of our modern heroes, some of whom, I have no doubt, through their distinguished feats of arms, will, some time or other, deserve the “cordon rouge” of the Order of the Bath having previously been dubbed by me “cordon bleu.”

A. SOYER

PS The small stoves lately ordered by Miss Nightingale upon my recommendation, from Glasgow, and noticed in your valuable journal, after a visit by that lady and myself to numerous camp hospitals, will shortly be delivered to those establishments, and with them will be made all the extra diets. Being very portable they will form a complete “batterie de cuisine” for those martial abodes of sick and wounded, and render them as comfortable as any general hospital. A.S.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1912: Antarctica

Robert Falcon Scott (1868–1912) led two expeditions to Antarctica, one in 1901–1904 and one in 1910–1913. He and his party reached the South Pole on January 17, 1912, to find that they had been beaten by the group led by the Norwegian Roald Amundsen. Scott and the other four in his party died on the return journey between March 16 and 19, victims of exhaustion, starvation, and blizzard conditions.

One week and 85 miles from their goal, the situation was already grim, but Scott remained optimistic:

Camp 62. Terrible hard march in the morning; only covered 5.1 miles (geo.). Decided to leave depot at lunch camp. Built cairn and left one week's food together with sundry articles of clothing. We are down as close as we can go in the latter. We go forward with eighteen days' food. Yesterday I should have said certain to see us through, but now the surface is beyond words, and if it continues we shall have the greatest difficulty to keep our march long enough.

JANUARY 11

DINNER WITH MARK TWAIN

1908: New York, USA

Mark Twain was guest of honor at a Lotos Club dinner on this evening, and the menu items were named for his characters and stories.

Innocent Oysters Abroad

Roughing It Soup

Huckleberry Finn Fish

Joan of Arc Filet of Beef

Jumping Frog Terrapin

Punch Brothers Punch

Gilded Duck

Hadleyburg Salad

Life on the Mississippi Ice Cream

Prince and the Pauper Cake

Pudd'nhead Cheese

White Elephant coffee

Chateau Yuem Royals

Pommery Brut

Henkow Cognac

THE SUBLIME SOCIETY OF BEEFSTEAKS

1735: London, England

The Sublime Society of Beefsteaks was formally established on this day and remained in operation until 1867. Numerous other “beefsteak” societies had existed before this date, but they did not gain the prominence or longevity of the Sublime Society. An ex-member, Walter Arnold, wrote (in 1871) an account of the origins of the society:

The society was founded by [John] Rich, the celebrated Harlequin and machinist, of Covent Garden Theatre, in 1735. Rich was a man of rare wit and invention. In his room at Covent Garden many of the eminent men of the time connected with literature, fashion, and the drama used to assemble to chat with Rich and his scene-painter, George Lambert. There from time to time they partook, at two ‘clock, of the hot steak dressed by Rich himself, accompanied by a bottle of old port from the tavern hard by.

Thus the nucleus of a brotherhood was formed, which, it is believed, outlived in point of time any other convivial gathering.

Membership was very exclusive. It was limited to twenty-four men, and it is said that even the Prince of Wales went onto the waiting list before he was accepted in 1785. Meetings were held 5 o’clock every Saturday from November until the end of June, and each member could bring a friend.

Beefsteaks in huge quantities were of course the focus of the meal, with the accompaniments being “baked potatoes, Spanish onions, cold and fried, beet root, and chopped eschalots, with toasted cheese as a final relish.” The “shalotting” was taken seriously, it being considered an essential contribution to a good beefsteak at the time and “a great aid in the strife for the possession of the final morsel on a plate.” The obligatory beverage with which the steaks were washed down was port, and it was consumed in great quantities at the meetings.

FOOD & TRAVEL

1854: England

The 470 ton barque *Time and Truth* departed Plymouth on this day with emigrants for Australia. It arrived in Adelaide on May 8, 1854.

Many passengers took their own supplies to supplement the ship's rations. The contract for the voyage specified the dietary allowance for each adult to be 6 ounces flour each day; 1 ounce tea, 8 ounces treacle, 4 ounces butter, and 12 ounces sugar each week; and 6 ounces beef on Saturdays only.

The surgeon superintendent also had available "medical comforts" which included 40 pounds sago, 500 pints of lemon juice (in wickered stone bottles of 5 gallons each), 86 gallons of stout, 5 gallons of brandy, and 10 dozen pints of preserved milk for each 100 adults. In his report of the voyage, the surgeon commented that "the fresh potatoes falling after 12 days, the preserved potatoes proved insufficient."

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1854: Africa

David Livingstone, on his great trans-African journey, wrote on this day:

On the 11th and 12th we were detained by incessant and violent rains. I had a little tapioca and a small quantity of Libonta meal, which I reserved for emergencies. The patience of my men under hunger was admirable. Present want is never so painful as the prospect of future starvation.

Tapioca is a starch obtained from the roots of the cassava (manioc) plant.

FOOD FIRSTS

1770: USA

The earliest mention of tofu by an American appears in a letter written on this day by

Benjamin Franklin, who was in London at the time, to John Bartram in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Franklin refers to the product as "cheese."

I send you however some of the true rhubarb seed, which you desire. I had

it from Mr. English, who lately received a medal of the Society of Arts for propagating it. I send also some green dry peas, highly esteemed here as the best for making pea soup; and also some Chinese caravances [soy beans], with Father Navarrete's account of the universal use of a cheese made of them in China, which so excited my curiosity, that I caused inquiry to be made of Mr. Flint, who lived many years there, in what manner the cheese was made, and I send you his answer. I have since learned, that some runnings of salt (I suppose runnet) is put into water, when the meal is in it, to turn it to curds. I think we have caravances with us, but I know not whether they are the same with these, which actually came from China. They are said to be of great increase.

SUGAR HISTORY

1799: Prussia

Franz Karl Achard (1753–1821) was a Prussian scientist noted for his discovery of a commercially viable method of producing sugar from sugar beets. It had been known since the work of Andreas Marggraf (1709–1782) in 1747 that beets contained extractable sugar, but the discovery was not considered at the time to have any practical application.

Achard had been a student of Marggraf, and he continued the work on beets, which at that time were widely grown for cattle food. Refined sugar, however, was an expensive imported item, and presumably Achard recognized the potential for a commercial application of the process.

On January 11, 1799, Achard addressed a petition to King Friedrich Wilhelm III, seeking his patronage to promote the cultivation of the beet and explore the preparation of sugar from it. The discovery proved enormously useful when the British blockaded French ports during the Napoleonic wars, preventing sugar from the Caribbean reaching the country.

JANUARY 12

ABBATOIR FIRE

1913: Calgary, Canada

A huge fire completely destroyed the premises of P. Burns & Co.—the largest meat-packing plant in western Canada—on this day. Fire-fighting efforts were hampered by -35°C temperatures, low water pressure, ammonia fumes, and the danger of exploding ammonia tanks. The fire was not able to be contained; damage in excess of \$2 million was sustained, and thousands of carcasses of beef, mutton, and pork in the cold storage rooms were lost. There were immediate fears of a meat shortage, as the plant was the main supplier of the western and coastal cities, but Mr. Pat Burns assured the public that supplies would be maintained from branch plants in Edmonton and Vancouver. He also announced that he would commence rebuilding the Calgary plant as soon as the weather allowed.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

1351: London, England

Offences against food regulations were taken seriously in the Middle Ages, and public humiliation was often part of the punishment. The offender was commonly paraded around the streets before spending time in the pillory, the rotten or unsound food tied around his or her neck so that all might see the reason for the punishment.

Dates were often recorded in reference to a saint's day or other religious observance. In 1351, St. Hilary's Day (January 13) fell on a Thursday, so the following event took place on January 12.

[B]efore Richard de Kyslyngbury, Mayor, the Aldermen, and John Note and William de Wircestre, Sheriffs of London, on the Wednesday next before the Feast of St. Hilary, . . . Henry de Passelewe, cook, was attached to make answer to the Commonalty of the City of London, and to Henry Pecche, who prosecutes for the city and for himself, in a plea of contempt and trespass; and as to which the said Henry makes plaint that he, the same Henry Pecche, on the Tuesday next before the Feast of St. Hilary, now last past, bought of the aforesaid Henry de Passelewe, cook, at the Stokkes, for himself and his two companions, two capons baked in a pasty; and that he, the same Henry Pecche, and his companions, being hungry, did not perceive that one of the said two capons was putrid and stinking, until they had eaten almost the whole thereof; whereupon they opened the second capon. which he produced here in Court. and found it to be putrid and

stinking, and an abomination to mankind; to the scandal, contempt, and disgrace, of all the City, and the manifest peril of the life of the same Henry and his companions; and this he makes offer to prove.

Naturally, Passelewe stated that the capons “were good, well-flavoured, fitting, and proper, and he requested that examination might be made thereof by men of his trade.” Six cooks were summoned to the court to inspect the capon, and all “said upon their oath, that the same capon, at the time of the sale thereof, was stinking and rotten, and baneful to the health of man.”

Therefore it was awarded, that the said Henry de Passelewe should have sentence of the pillory, there to remain for the space of one league’s journey in the day; and that the capon, which had been so found to be putrid and stinking, should be carried before the said Henry de Passelewe on his way to the pillory; and that at the pillory proclamation should be made to all the people there present, as to the reason for the sentence so awarded against the same Henry de Passelewe.

LAMPREYS

1202: England

King John (1166–1216) made an order for lampreys to be sourced from Nantes, in France.

John, by the grace of God, King, &c. to all his faithful subjects. Know ye, that we have given licence to Sampson, the bearer of these presents, to go to Nantes and there to purchase lampreys for the use of the Countess of Blois. These letters are to be valid for one journey only and no more. Witness ourself at Bauge, on the 12th day of January, in the 3d year of our reign.

1207: England

King John made an order to control the price of lampreys in Gloucester. The river Severn was a famous source for the very desirable lamprey—an oily, “meaty” fish especially prized at Lent and on other mandated meatless days.

The King [John], &c. to his sheriffs and burgesses of Gloucester, and to all other his faithful subjects. Know ye that it is ordained by our command

under his former subjects. Know ye, that it is ordained by our command, and by the advice of our barons, that every year when lampreys are first caught they shall not be sold for more than two shillings each, until after February, when they are to be sold at a lower price. We therefore prohibit you, under pain of forfeiture and amerciament, from acting herein contrary to our commandment. Witness Geoffrey Fitz Pierre, Justiciary of England, at Reading, on the 12th day of January, in the 8th year of our reign.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1841: Australia

From the journal of Edward John Eyre (1815–1901) written during an expedition into central Australia:

In our route back to “Yeer-kumban-kauwe” we were lucky enough to add to our fare a rat and a bandicoot, we might also have had a large brown snake, but neither the boy nor I felt inclined to experimentalise upon so uninviting an article of food; after all it was probably mere prejudice, and the animal might have been as good eating as an eel.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1664: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys: “[A]nd so home—getting things against dinner ready. And anon comes my uncle Wight and my aunt with their Cozen Mary and Robert, and by chance my Uncle Tho. Pepys. We had a good dinner, the chief dish a swan roasted, and that excellent meat.”

Today, we “roast” a joint of meat in an oven, but in the past, “roasting” indicated cooking meat on spit in front of a fire. The spit would be turned slowly by a kitchen boy, a dog in a wheel, or a mechanical jack [see Pepys’s diary entry for January 13]. “Baking” applied to cooking inside an oven, and at this time most homes did not have ovens, but sent their bread and pies to be baked by the baker, for a fee, in the residual heat of his brick oven, after the bread was taken out. Bread was baked on the floor of the oven, but everything else was baked in a pastry “coffin”—a thick pastry shell—as there were no shaped metal baking containers at this time.

Pepys was impressed with being served swan, which was considered a rather exotic delicacy from medieval times—in spite of it not being as tasty as other large birds—probably because of its “royal bird” status.

Here are some general roasting instructions from the time of Samuel Pepys:

To proceed then to Roast meats, it is to be understood, that in the general knowledge thereof are to be observed these few Rules: first the clean keeping and scouring of the spits and cob-irons; Next, the neat picking and washing of the meat, before it be spitted, then the spitting and broaching of meat, which must be done strongly and firmly, that the meat may by no means either shrink from the spit, or else turn about the spit; and yet ever to observe, that the spit do not go through any principal part of the meat, but such is of least account and estimation; and if it be birds or fowl that you spit, then to let the spit go through the hollow of the body of the fowl, and so fasten it with pricks or skewers under the wings about the thighs of the fowl, and at the feet or Rump, according to your manner of trussing and dressing them.

. . . Then to know the Temperatures of fires for every meat, and which have a slow fire, and yet a good one, taking leisure in roasting, as Chines of Beef, Swans, Turkeys, Peacocks, Bustards, . . . Then to know the complexions of meats, as which must be pale and white roasted, and yet thoroughly roasted, as Mutton, Lambl, Kid . . . [and] which must be brown roasted, as Beef, Venison, Pork, Swan, Geese, Piggs.

—*A Way to Get Wealth: Containing Six Principall Vocations . . .* (1668), by Gervase Markham

1763: England

James Boswell (1740–1795), the biographer of Samuel Johnson, had at last arranged an assignation with Louisa, the actress whom he wished to make his mistress. Masquerading as man and wife travelling from a distance away, they arrived at the Black Lion Inn where they lodged for the night. Boswell hoped that a genteel supper and wine would have an aphrodisiac effect.

We contrived to seem as if we had come off a journey, and carried in a bundle our night-clothes, handkerchiefs, and other little things. We also had with us some almond biscuits, or as they call them in London, macaroons

with us some almond biscuits, or as they call them in LONDON, macaroons, which looked like provisions on the road. . . . That Ceres and Bacchus might in moderation lend their assistance to Venus, I ordered a genteel supper and some wine.

JANUARY 13

FOOD & WAR

1943: USA

The Office of Price Administration announced that hot dog sausages or frankfurters would be replaced by “Victory Sausages” made of meat plus “an unspecified amount of soybean meal or some other substitute.” Two nationalistic principles were satisfied by the decision.

It was not appropriate for a favorite food to be so obviously German in origin when the country was at war with Germany. The same reasoning had been applied in World War I, when “sauerkraut” became “Liberty Cabbage,” and it was applied again during the Gulf War when “French Fries” briefly became “Freedom Fries.”

The new sausage also met the goal of reducing meat consumption. The public was assured that the new sausage “would meet the standards of wholesome nutrition regardless of how much substitute matter it contained.”

The concept of victory sausage had been discussed for months, and it provided a fine opportunity for the press to demonstrate its skills at word-play. Under the heading “The Worst Is Yet to Come: Soybean Sausages to Form Links in Chain of Victory,” a reporter for the *Chicago Sun* some time previously had noted that there were three points of advantage: the victory sausage required much less pork; it provided an additional market for soya meal, which was left over from soy oil production; and “it is said to contain more vitamins than, and just as many proteins as pork sausage.”

Soybeans and Soybean Products as Food, published in 1943 by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, had the following to say about the use of soybean products in sausages:

Soya with Sausage and in Soup

Ten percent of soybean flour or grits added to sausage meat may increase the total protein content of this food combination over that of sausage alone by about 27 percent without affecting the flavor. Specifications for soybean products to be added to sausage meat include requirements for size of particles, water content, tests for bacteria, fiber content, fat content, and packaging. When such mixtures are sold commercially the label should indicate the ingredients.

Soybean products are being used by soup manufacturers in many types of soup powders. Millions of pounds of such soups have been used in the school-lunch program and for shipment under lend-lease, and a few are already available in grocery stores. Soya flour or grits give soups higher nutritive value and a desirable body and flavor. These soups are made from a wide variety of formulas, which call for such other ingredients as navy or lima bean powder, green or yellow pea powder, dry skim milk, dried vegetables, and seasonings. Usually up to 25 or 30 percent of a soya product is used.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1841: Australia

From the journal of Edward John Eyre (1815–1901) written during an expedition into central Australia:

Our fire had gone out during the night, and all our matches being wet, we could not relight it until noon, when the rays of a hot sun had dried them again. Having eaten our slender dinner, I walked out to water the horses, leaving the boy in charge of the camp. Upon my return I found him comfortably seated between two of our friends the natives, who had just returned from a hunting excursion, bringing with them the half roasted carcass of a very fine kangaroo. They had already bestowed upon the boy two very large pieces, and as soon as I made my appearance they were equally liberal to me, getting up the moment I arrived at the camp, and bringing it over to me of their own accord. The supply was a most acceptable one, and we felt very grateful for it. Having received as much of the kangaroo as would fully last for two days, I gave a knife in return to the

eldest of the men, with which he seemed highly delighted. I would gladly have given one to the other also, but I had only one left, and could not spare it. The natives remained in camp with us for the night, and seemed a good deal surprised when they saw us re-roasting the kangaroo; frequently intimating to us that it had already been cooked, and evidently pitying the want of taste which prevented us from appreciating their skill in the culinary art.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1663: London, England

Samuel Pepys hosted a dinner on this day. He is proud that he now has a kitchen jack—a device for rotating a spit on which meat is roasted before a fire. He is also proud of his developing wealth and status, as his description of the evening shows:

My poor wife rose by 5 a-clock in the morning, before day and went to market and bought fowle and many other things for dinner—with which I was highly pleased. And the chine of beef was done also before 6 a-clock, and my own Jacke, of which I was doubtful, doth carry it very well. Things being put in order and the Cooke come, I went to the office, where we sat till noon; and then broke up and I home—whither by and by comes Dr. Clerke and his lady—his sister and a she-Cosen, and Mr. Pierce and his wife, which was all my guest(s). I had for them, after oysters—at first course, a hash of rabbits and lamb, and a rare chine of beef—next a great dish of roasted fowl, cost me about 30s., and a tart; and then fruit and cheese. My dinner was noble and enough. . . . I find my new table very proper, and will hold nine or ten people well, but eight with great room. . . . At night to supper; had a good sack-posset and cold meat and sent my guests away about 10 a-clock at night—both them and myself highly pleased with our management of this day. . . . I believe this day's feast will cost me near 5 [pounds].

JANUARY 14

MALLARD DAY

Oxford, England

Mallard Day is held annually at All Souls College in Oxford to celebrate the discovery of a large mallard found in a drain during the digging of the foundations of the college in 1437.

Griffon, Bustard, Turkey, Capon,

Let to her hungry mortals gape on;

And on the bones their stomach fall hard,

But let All Souls' men have their mallard.

Oh! by the blood of King Edward,

Oh! by the blood of King Edward,

It was a wopping, wopping mallard.

The ceremony of “hunting the mallard” was an annual celebration of this event. By 1632 it had already degenerated into a rowdy, drunken revel that disturbed the peace and resulted in damage to property. The ceremony fell into disrepute and was abandoned in the early eighteenth century, to be revived in 1801 (as part of the celebration of the new century), and again in 1901 and 2001, with the next event planned for 2101. Naturally, mallard was generally served at the celebratory banquet. The traditional sauce to serve with the mallard in medieval times was a “black sauce.”

Sawce noyre for malard

Take brede and blode iboiled, and grynde it, and drawe it thurgh a cloth with vynegar. Do thereto powdor of gynger; and of peper, and the grece of the malard. Salt it, boile it wel, and serve it forth.

—*The Forme of Cury* (1395)

Interpretation:

Black Sauce for a Mallard

Take bread and blood boiled together and grind them and add vinegar and strain them through a cloth. Add ginger, pepper, and mallard fat. Salt it and boil it well, and serve it forth.

BANQUET OF THE DAY

1687: Rome

Roger Palmer, first Earl of Castlemaine (1634–1705) was appointed ambassador to the Vatican in 1687. On January 14, 1687, he held a huge “entertainment” for Pope Innocent XI, the cardinals present in the Vatican, members of the nobility (including Queen Christina of Sweden), and other important folk who happened to be in Rome at the time. In all, more than a thousand people attended and were fed and entertained.

The ambassador’s steward was the artist John Michael Wright, and he described the event in detail:

The Table was fitted to the length of the Room, and being cover’d with fine Damask . . . eighty Velvet Chairs . . . only between every four there was one place left for a Carver and over against him, for a Sewer [Server], so that each eight Persons, had these two Officers to attend them as to the Eating Part, and behind, every one had a Servant, to bring whatsoever he wanted, or desired.

The breadth of the said Table was eight foot . . . and through the middle of it, from one end to the other, ran a Range of Historical Figures (some half as big as the Life) with the *Italians* call *Trionfi* [Triumphs] They are made of a kind of Sugar-Paste, but modelled, to the utmost skill of a Statuary; So that they are afterwards sent as Presents to the greatest Ladies; and their use at Entertainments, is to gratifie the Eye, as the Meat, Musique, and Perfumes, so the other Senses.

This large table, having (as is said) these adornments in the middle, had between them, and the napkins, (which were also most artificially folded) two rows of Assiets, or Intermesses, on either side, fill’d with all sorts of relishing bits, whether salt, sweet or soure; as Pickles, Butter, slices of

delicate Bacon, Bologna-Sausages, Taratufoli, Composts, &c., all which, stood in the abovesaid order, for two whole days, (according to the Roman way) that everyone's curiosity might have some share in the Entertainment.

As for the Feast itself (which began about one) it consisted of twenty four Imperial Dishes . . . and these the Italians call Imperial, be reason of the largeness, and richness of them: as filled with whatever Art could devise, or Industry procure. Two of each of the said twenty-four were served at a time.

And now, the Company, who had abandon'd themselves to mirth beginning to be satisfied, the aforesaid twelve courses . . . and then the Triumphs . . . being taken away, they cover'd the whole Table with all kinds of Sweetmeats imaginable, which, after a little time . . . were all snatch'd and carried away. Thus (after three hours) ended this Famous Entertainment, with universal satisfaction, and applause.

THE CORDON BLEU COOKING SCHOOL

1895: Paris, France

The Cordon Bleu Cooking School, founded by Marthe Distell, opened on this day with a cooking demonstration. Distell was the publisher of the culinary magazine *La Cuisinière Cordon Bleu*, and the demonstration—the first ever to use an electric stove—was intended to promote both the magazine and the cooking school. The school quickly developed an international reputation for excellence, and students came from all over the world to be taught by famous chefs. One of its famous graduates was Julia Child, who became a student at the school in 1950.

CANNABIS COOKIES

1981: San Francisco, California, USA

Mary Jane Rathbun (1921–1999), known as “Brownie Mary,” was a hospital volunteer and cannabis activist who campaigned vigorously (and ultimately successfully) for the legalization of cannabis for medical use in California. She is said to have cooked up to fifty dozen chocolate cannabis cookies a day, which she distributed to patients with HIV/AIDS.

On the night of January 14, 1981, police raided her home and found more than 18 pounds (8.2 kilograms) of cannabis and over fifty dozen cannabis brownies. She was sentenced to 500 hours of community service and a three-year probationary sentence. Rathbun was arrested two more times on the same charges.

FOOD & WAR

1900: South Africa, Boer War

From *The Diary of a Doctor's Wife* during the siege of Kimberley, by Winifred Heberden:

Sunday. There is now a "Milk Depot" opened where you take your Permit for fresh or condensed milk. The latter is coming to an end and is strictly limited to one tin only per week, and is no longer allowed to adults, so old people must feel the deprivation severely. There is a fair supply of fresh milk still, but only half a bottle a day is given to each medically certificated case at the rate of sixpence a bottle. The hospital uses a great deal as there are now over 50 cases of typhoid there.

1945: Stalag VIIIC, Sagan, Germany (now Poland)

Lance Corporal John James Bird of the 1st Airborne Division became a German prisoner of war in September 1944. On this date the prisoners had just been issued with Red Cross relief parcels—one between two men.

Weather sunny today—sent postcards home—still eating well—beans on toast and honey for breakfast. Baked cake from Yorkshire pudding powder—amazing what one can do with a little ingenuity and the necessary ingredients. Very tasty, spread with honey.

PASTA HISTORY

1329: Italy

Many types of pasta were already being made in Italy in the fourteenth century.

A resident of Prione in Genoa named Gualterius Lasagnarius was mentioned in a legal document on this day. The name means “Lasagne Maker.”

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769: Tierra del Fuego

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks. They are in Tierra del Fuego.

The Captn stood into a bay just without Cape St Vincent and while the ship plyd off and on Dr Solander and myself went ashore in the boat and found many plants, about 100, tho we were not ashore above 4 hours; of these I may say every one was new and intirely different from what either of us had before seen. . . . Among other things the bay affords there is plenty of winters bark, easy to be known by its broad leaf like a laurel of a light green colour and blueish underneath, the bark is easily stripd off with a bone or stick as ours are barkd in England; its virtues are so well known that I shall say little except that it may be us'd as a spice even in culinary matters and is found to be very wholesome. Here is also plenty of wild celery apium antescorbuticum, scurvy grass cardamine antescorbutica, both which are as pleasant to the taste as any herbs of the kind found in Europe and I beleive possess as much virtue in curing the scurvy.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's *Journal of an Inland Expedition in Australia*. Leichhardt and the men in his party experimented with many seeds and plants in their enthusiasm to find a coffee substitute during the expedition.

In the bed of the river, which was here broad and sandy, a bean was gathered, bearing racemes of pink blossoms, and spreading its long slender stem over the ground, or twining it round shrubs and trees: its pods were from three to five inches long, and about half an inch broad, containing from four to six seeds, very similar to the horse-bean. This plant was afterwards found growing in the sandy beds, or along the bergs of almost all the broad rivers, and was always a welcome sight; for the seeds, after roasting and pounding them, afforded us a very agreeable substitute for

roasting and pounding them, afforded us a very agreeable substitute for coffee.

This bean was *Canavalia rosea*, the “beach bean.” The beans are poisonous when raw. Captain James Cook was the first Englishman to taste them and thought they were “not to be despised,” but Joseph Banks, the naturalist who accompanied him, described them as “a kind of beans, very bad.”

1874: France

The Scottish writer Robert Louis Stevenson (1850–1894) was travelling in Europe and wrote to his friend Mrs. Sitwell on this day:

Mentone, Wednesday 10.30—We have all been to tea tonight at the Russians’ villa. Tea was made out of a samovar, which is something like a small steam engine, and whose principal advantage is that it burns the fingers of all who lay their profane touch upon it.

JANUARY 15

BOSTON MOLASSES FLOOD

1919: Boston, Massachusetts, USA

Two million gallons of molasses flooded the streets of Boston on this day when a storage tank exploded. Twenty-one people died and 150 were injured as a result of the freak accident. The explosion sent sheets of metal and debris hurtling outward with sufficient force to slice through the girders of the nearby elevated railway. A tide of molasses spewed out and poured through the streets in a wave up to 15 feet (4.5 meters) high at a speed of 35 miles per hour (56 kilometers per hour), knocking buildings off their foundations and proving impossible to outrun.

The cause of the explosion was never fully determined, but it was probably due to an unexpectedly warm day causing a sudden increase in fermentation and hence a rapid rise in pressure in a poorly constructed and overfilled tank.

Eventually salt water from Boston harbor was pumped into the town to flush the streets, but it took many months to remove the sticky mess—and locals say you

can still smell the molasses on some days.



Deadly Molasses Spill on El

(©Bettmann/Corbis / AP Image)

INVENTIONS & PATENTS

1889: USA

Daniel Johnson of Kansas City, Kansas, was granted Patent No. 396,089 for a “Rotary Dining Table.” The patentee described his invention as follows:

[A] combined rotary table and adjustable chair adapted for saloons of sea-going vessels and of other descriptions, in which the occupants of the chairs may be served in rotation from one stationary base of supply without the danger and inconvenience incident to the person making the circuit of the table when the vessel is upon the seas, and also enabling the persons seated at the table to be served with dispatch.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1493: Hispaniola (now Haiti and the Dominican Republic)

Christopher Columbus (Cristóbal Colón, 1451–1506) was an Italian-born explorer and navigator who undertook four voyages across the Atlantic on behalf of the Spanish monarchy and thereby led the way for the European colonization of the Americas (the “New World”). He makes the first known mention of the chili, which the local people called *axi*: “Also there is much *axi*, which is their pepper, much stronger than [our] pepper, and everyone won’t eat without it, for they find it very healthful; it would be possible to fill fifty caravels each year in Hispaniola.”

1844: USA

John C. Frémont (1813–1890) was an American military officer and mapmaker who led multiple expeditions into the Rocky Mountains, Oregon, and Northern California in the 1840s and was instrumental in opening up the American West to settlement. On this date his party was near Pyramid Lake, in Nevada.

[W]e found the *inlet* of a large fresh-water stream, and all at once were satisfied that it was neither Mary’s river nor the waters of the Sacramento, but that we had discovered a large interior lake. . . . An Indian brought in a large fish to trade, which we had the inexpressible satisfaction to find was a salmon trout; we gathered round him eagerly. The Indians were amused with our delight, and immediately brought in numbers; so that the camp was soon stocked. Their flavor was excellent—superior, in fact, to that of any fish I have ever known. They were of extraordinary size—about as large as the Columbia river salmon—generally from two to four feet in length. . . .

In the meantime, such a salmon-trout feast as is seldom seen was going on in our camp, and every variety of manner in which fish could be prepared—boiled, fried and roasted in the ashes—was put into requisition; and every few minutes an Indian would be seen running off to spear a fresh one.

The next day he wrote “we continued our journey along this beautiful stream, which we naturally called the Salmon Trout River.” It is now called the Truckee River.

A sobering note is that the Lahontan cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki*

henshawi), which was so abundant and easy to catch in Frémont's time, became extinct in Pyramid Lake by the 1940s.

FOOD & WAR

1900: South Africa, Boer War

From *The Diary of a Doctor's Wife*, by Winifred Heberden:

Jack is having a good deal of trouble with the men at the Camp who won't eat horse-flesh. Some have not touched meat since it was first served out, and as they only have bread and coffee besides, with occasionally mealie meal porridge, their condition when they arrive on "Sick Parade" is very low and weak, and unless they are sent to the already congested Hospital, there is nothing much to be done for them at the Camp where the stock of medical comforts, except cocoa, is finished. However, Jack is doing his best to requisition for bacon and ham and cheese, having been told by a "Little Bird" that they have been carefully saved up somewhere.

Mealie meal is a coarse flour made from maize. It is a staple food in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1661: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys. He writes on this day of visiting the Naval Yards in his capacity as a civil servant for the Admiralty: "So, after a cup of burnt wine at the taverne there [the London docks]."

Burnt wine is brandy. Both names come from *brandewijn*, the Dutch word for brandy, which translates literally as "burnt wine."

1662: London, England

John Evelyn (1620–1706) was an English diarist, author, gardener, and one of the founders of the Royal Society. He was a contemporary of the other famous seventeenth-century diarist, Samuel Pepys, with whom he corresponded. In his

diary for this day, he notes the day of fasting that had been proclaimed for the whole nation:

Was Indicted a generall Fast through the whole Nation, & now celebrated at Lond: to avert Gods heavy judgement on this Land, there having falln so greate raine without any frost or seasonable cold: & not onely in England, but in Sweden & the most northern parts; it being here neere as warme as at Midsomer some yeares.

Samuel Pepys mentions the same fast in his diary entry on this day, although he did not obey the injunction:

This morning Mr. Berchenshaw [his music teacher] came again; and after he had examined me and taught me something in my work, he and I went to breakfast in my chamber, upon a Coller of brawne. And after we had eaten, he asked me whether we have not committed a fault in eating today, telling me that it is a fast day, ordered by parliament to pray for more seasonable weather—it having hither to been some summer weather . . . which doth threaten a plague.

A *collar* (or *coller*) is a piece of meat (especially brawn) or fish (especially eels) tied up in a roll.

Brawn (or *brawne*) is the muscle or flesh of any animal used as food, but when the word is not qualified (as in “the brawn of a capon”) it generally indicates the flesh of a boar or pig.

1766: London, England

Benjamin Franklin, living in England, wrote regularly for a daily newspaper. On this day in 1766 he responded (with tongue firmly in cheek) to the reaction produced by his article “In Defense of Indian Corn”:

JOHN BULL shews in nothing more his great veneration for good eating, and how much he is always thinking of his belly, than in his making it the constant topic of his contempt for other nations, that they do not eat so well as himself. The roast beef of Old England he is always exulting in, as if no other country had beef to roast;—reproaching, on every occasion, the Welsh with their leeks and toasted cheese, the Irish with their potatoes, and

the Scotch with their oatmeal. And now that we are a little out of favour with him, he has begun, by his attorney VINDEX PATRIAE, to examine our eating and drinking, in order, I apprehend, to fix some horrible scandal of the same kind upon us poor *Americans*.

I did but say a word or two in favour of Indian corn, which he treated as “disagreeable and indigestible” and this vindictive gentleman grows angry. “Let him tell the world, IF HE DARES (says he) that the Americans prefer it to a place at their own tables.” Ah, Sir, I see the dilemma you have prepared for me. If I should not dare to say, that we do prefer it to a place at our tables, then you demonstrate, that we must come to England for tea, or go without our breakfasts: and if I do dare to say it, you fix upon me and my countrymen for ever, the indelible disgrace of being Indian corn-eaters. . . . “Why doth he not deny the fact (says VINDEX) that it is assigned to the slaves for their food? To proclaim the wholesomeness of this corn, without assigning a reason why white men give it to their slaves, when they can get other food, is only satirizing the good sense of their brethren in America.” In truth I cannot deny the fact, though it should reflect ever so much on the good sense of my countrymen. I own we do give food made of Indian corn to our slaves, as well as eat it ourselves; not, as you suppose, because it is “indigestible and unwholesome;” but because it keeps them healthy, strong and hearty, and fit to go through all the labour we require of them. Our slaves, Sir, cost us money, and we buy them to make money by their labour. If they are sick, they are not only unprofitable, but expensive. Where then was your English good sense, when you imagined we gave the slaves our Indian corn, because we knew it to be unwholesome?

JANUARY 16

PUFFER FISH POISONING

1975: Kyoto, Japan



Puffer-fish

The famous Kabuki actor and National Living Treasure Mitsugorō Bando VIII (b. 1906) died on this day of *fugu* (puffer fish) poisoning.

Puffer fish contain tetrodotoxin, a powerful nerve poison which can kill quickly and particularly unpleasantly by paralysing the respiratory muscles, so that breathing stops while consciousness is maintained for a period of time. Each fish contains enough poison to kill thirty adults. The liver of the fish is the most dangerous but, according to aficionados, is the most tasty. Bando had requested four servings of fugu liver in a Kyoto restaurant on this day, believing himself to be immune to its dangers, and the chef was unwilling to refuse such an honored guest. He died after seven hours of convulsions and paralysis.

In spite of—or perhaps because of—the dangers, fugu is an extraordinarily expensive delicacy in Japan. Fugu chefs must undergo a rigorous three-year training period before being licenced to prepare the fish. The internal organs, which contain most of the poison, must be removed with scrupulous care without the most minute contamination of the flesh. Once upon a time, if a customer died as a result of eating fugu, the chef would have been expected to commit *seppuku*, or ritual suicide by disembowelling. The chef who served the fugu to Bando merely had his licence revoked. It has been illegal to serve fugu

liver in Japan since 1984.

It is of interest that Captain James Cook suffered (but did not die from) fugu poisoning in 1774, in New Caledonia (*see* September 8).

FOOD & WAR

1862: American Civil War

The *New York Herald* ran an article about the food served to Union prisoners in Libby Prison in Richmond.

The following is the prison bill of fare which was regularly served to the Union prisoners just returned from Richmond:—Breakfast—Five ounces of bread, three ounces of meat; no coffee or tea. No dinner. Supper—Half a pint of soup, and four ounces of bread. The men speak in the highest terms of the kindness of the late Dr. Griswold, Assistant Surgeon of the Thirty-eighth regiment, who died at Charleston, and say he was unceasing in his endeavors to contribute everything in his power for their comfort. The day he went to Charleston he came to the prison to bade them all goodbye. They speak in bitter terms of the treatment our wounded received at Richmond, and say they were sent to prison quarters long before their wounds were healed.

1950: Germany, Post–World War II

The government in Bonn announced that post-war rationing of all foods except sugar would end on March 1. This is how the news was reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (Australia):

GERMANY ENDS RATIONING!

Shops Bulge with Food.

The West German Food Ministry announced last night that all food rationing, except sugar, would end in West Germany on March 1. The Ministry said that meat, butter, fat, bread, eggs and milk would be in ample supply at moderate prices.

Almost simultaneously, a British Government spokesman said that there was no prospect of ending rationing in Britain for some years. The “Daily Mail” commented this morning: “Germany—the battered, shattered, defeated Germany—is to abolish rationing. . . . Austrian shops are bulging with goods that the women of victorious Britain would like to see.”

Egg, Meat Prices Down

The decision to end German rationing was recommended by the West German food minister, Professor Wilhelm Niklas, whom Allied spokesmen rebuked a fortnight ago for hinting at derationing of food.

Professor Niklas said yesterday: “We have so much rye for brown bread that we don’t know what to do with it.” The Germans prefer rye bread to white bread baked with wheat bought for them since the war by the British and American taxpayer.

. . . A British Government spokesman said last night that there was no prospect of ending rationing in Britain for some years. However, he added, supplies of some foods might make an increase in certain rations possible in 1950–51. The present weekly food ration for each British adult includes 1/6 worth of meat, 4oz bacon, 4oz butter, 4oz margarine, 2oz cooking fat, 21oz tea, 8oz sugar, and 4oz sweets. In addition, a large number of food items, including spaghetti and breakfast cereals, are distributed on a “points” basis.

FOOD & THE LAW

1548: England

A Proclamation for the abstaining of Flesh in the Lent time

Yet his Highness [Edward VI] is advertised and informed . . . a great part of his subjects do break and contemn that abstinence which of long time hath been used in this his Majesty’s realm upon the Fridays and Saturdays, and the time commonly called Lent, and other accustomed times . . . but his Majesty hath allowed and approved the days and times before accustomed, to be continued and still observed here in this Church of England: both that

to be continued and still observed here in this Church of England, both that men should on those days abstain and forbear their pleasures, and the meats wherein they have more delight; to the intent to subdue their bodies unto the soul and spirit; unto the which to exhort and move men, is the office of a good and godly head and ruler: and also for worldly and civil policy certain days in the year to spare flesh, and use fish, for the benefit of the commonwealth, and profit of this his Majesty's realm: whereof many be fishers, and men using that trade of living unto the which this realm on every part environed with the seas, and so plentiful of fresh waters, doth easily minister occasion; to the great sustenance of this his Highness's people. So that hereby both the nourishment of the land might be increased by saving flesh, and specially at the spring time, when Lent doth commonly fall, and when the most common and plenteous breeding of flesh is. And also, divers of his loving subjects have good livings, and get great riches thereby, in uttering and selling such meats as the sea and fresh water doth minister unto us; and this his Majesty's realm hath more plenty of ships, boats, crays, and other vessels, by reason of those which by hope of lucre do follow that trade of living.

Wherefore, his Majesty, having consideration, that where men of their own minds do not give themselves, so oft as they should do, to fasting, a common abstinence may and should be by the prince enjoined and commanded . . . upon pain that whosoever shall, upon any day heretofore wont to be fasted from flesh, and not by the King's Highness or his predecessors abrogate and taken away, eat flesh contrary to this proclamation, shall incur the King's high indignation, and shall suffer imprisonment, and be otherwise grievously punished, at his Majesty's will and pleasure.

And where the late King of most famous memory, father to his Highness, hath given divers years license to his subjects in the time of Lent, to eat butter, cheese, and other meats, commonly called white meats, the King's Highness, by the advice aforesaid, considering the same to have been done not without great considerations, doth give likewise license and authority to all his loving subjects from henceforth freely for ever in the time of Lent, or other prohibited times by law or custom, to eat butter, eggs, cheese, and other white meats, any law, statute, act, or custom to the contrary notwithstanding.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1770: Tahiti

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks. He suspected the natives of practicing cannibalism.

“*Totarra nue*” The family were employd when we came ashore in dressing their provisions, which were a dog who was at that time buried in their oven and near it were many provision baskets. Looking carelessly upon one of these we by accident observd 2 bones, pretty clean pickd, which as apeard upon examination were undoubtedly human bones. Tho we had from the first of our arrival upon the coast constantly heard the Indians acknowledge the custom of eating their enemies we had never before had a proof of it, but this amounted almost to demonstration: the bones were clearly human, upon them were evident marks of their having been dressd on the fire, the meat was not intirely pickd off from them and on the grisly ends which were gnawd were evident marks of teeth, and these were accidentally found in a provision basket. On asking the people what bones are these? they answerd, The bones of a man.—And have you eat the flesh?—Yes.—Have you none of it left?—No.—Why did not you eat the woman who we saw today in the water?—She was our relation.—Who then is it that you do eat?—Those who are killd in war.—And who was the man whose bones these are?—5 days ago a boat of our enemies came into this bay and of them we killd 7, of whom the owner of these bones was one.—The horroure that apeard in the countenances of the seamen on hearing this discourse which was immediately translated for the good of the company is better conceivd than describd. For ourselves and myself in particular we were before too well convincd of the existence of such a custom to be surprizd, tho we were pleasd at having so strong a proof of a custom which human nature holds in too great abhorrence to give easy credit to.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1662: London, England

From the diary of John Evelyn:

After this I accompanied the Duke [of York] to an East India vessel that lay

After this I accompanied the Duke [of York] to an East-India vessel that lay at Black-Wall, where they gave us an Entertainment of several curiosities: amongst other spirituous drinks, as Punch &c, they gave us Canarie that had been carried to and fro from the Indies, which was indeed incomparably good.

Canarie, or Canary wine (also known as *Malmsey*), was a fortified sweet white wine from the Canary Islands. It is known to have been produced there in the fifteenth century by the Spanish. There is a record of it being imported to England in 1597, although from Evelyn's account it was still a rare treat well into the seventeenth century.

1901: Alaska Territory

Photographer Edward C. Adams wrote home from the Klondike goldfields on this day: "Ice Cream would be a hot drink here. Coal Oil is frozen in the cans. Alcohol follows suit and in fact everything else."

JANUARY 17

SAINT ANTHONY'S FEAST DAY

Saint Anthony the Great is particularly favored in parts of Italy and Spain (especially

Mallorca) where his feast day is celebrated with great gusto. Saint Anthony is often depicted with a pig, perhaps because legend says he was once a swineherd, and the festivities in the places where his feast day is celebrated often include pork dishes.

In some Italian regions the day is known as *Festa del Porco*. Animals are blessed on this day (Anthony is also a patron saint of farm animals), and pork is eaten in many forms including *salame*, *prosciutto*, and blood puddings. Dishes of beans (symbolizing death) and chestnuts (symbolizing fertility) are also eaten. In Mallorca, the saint is especially celebrated in *Sa Pobla*, where the traditional dish is *s'espinaçada*, a dish of eels wrapped in pastry.

A WEDDING DINNER

1530: Clifton, near Nottingham, England

When Sir Gervase Clifton married Mary Nevile (Neville) at Clifton Hall, the expenses for the wedding dinner were recorded by her father as follows:

Expenses of the Dinner, at the Maryage of the said Gervas Clifton and Mary Nevile

3 Hogsheads of Wine (1 white, 1 red, and a claret)	05 05
2 Oxen	03 00
2 Brawns	01 00
12 Swans, every Swan 6s.	03 12
8 Cranes, every Crane 3s 4d	01 06
16 Hearonsews [Hérons] every one 14 d.	00 16
10 Butters [Bitterns] every one 14d.	00 11
60 Cowple [Couple] Conys [Rabbits] every Cowple, 5d	01 05
As many Wild Fowl, and the Charge of the Same, as cost	03 06
16 Capons of Grease [i.e fat]	00 16
30 other Capon, every Capon 6d	00 15

10 Pigs, every Pid 5d	00 04
6 Calves	00 16
One other Calfe	00 03
7 Lambs	00 10
6 Whethers, every Whether 2s.4d	00 14
8 Quarter of Barley Malt, every Quarter 18s	05 12
3 Quarter of Wheat, every Quarter 18s.	02 14
4 Dosen of Chickens	00 04

Besides, Butter, Eggs, Vergas [Verjuice] and Vinegar

LUNCH WITH QUEEN VICTORIA

1899: England

Queen Victoria's favorite palace was Osborne House, the royal family's holiday home on the Isle of Wight. The Queen was still holidaying there when she was long widowed and almost eighty years old, in 1899. The lunch menu on this day offered a standard selection of dishes for the late nineteenth century.

Potage aux huitres.

Oeufs brouillés aux truffes.

Côtelettes de Veau à l'Allemande.

Poulets découpés à l'Anglaise.

Boeuf braisé au Macaroni.

Faisans à la Casserole.

Chicorée à la crème.

Poulets rôtis.

Buffet.

Cold Rt Fowls. Cold Rt. Beef.

Cold Tongue Spiced Beef.

Galantine Game Pie.

Salade Normande.

Soufflés à la Circassienne.

Crème de Pêches à la Montreuil.

Petits Gâteaux Condés.

The *Côtelettes de Veau* (veal cutlets) on this menu were served with Allemande (“German style”) sauce. This was one of the classic sauces in the French *repertoire de cuisine*. Here is a recipe for it from *The Modern Cook* (1846) by Charles Elmé Francatelli, who was briefly Queen Victoria’s chef:

Allemande Sauce

Reduce the quantity of white *velouté* sauce intended for the *allemande*, over a brisk stove fire, adding a little essence of mushrooms or some mushroom trimmings; when the sauce is sufficiently reduced, take it off the stove, and incorporate with it a leason [*liaison*] of yolks of eggs (in the proportion of four yolks to a pint), a little nutmeg, cream, a pat of butter, and a little lemon-juice; set the leason in the sauce, by stirring it over the fire until it simmers; it must then be quickly stirred to keep the sauce from boiling, as, in that case, the yolks of eggs would be liable to curdle, which would considerably deteriorate from its quality. When the leason is set, pass the sauce through a tammy into a basin, or *bain-marie*, for use.

This sauce is in much request, as the foundation of many others, especially fish sauces.

FOOD FIRSTS

1784: England

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the word *lolly-pops* appeared in print for the first time in the *London Chronicle* of this date, in the following sentence: “She confessed . . . that a certain person . . . had enticed her to commit it [sc. the robbery], and given her sweetmeats, called lolly-pops.”

The *OED* defines the word as “[t]he name of a particular kind of sweetmeat, consisting chiefly of sugar or treacle, that dissolves easily in the mouth.” It appears that only later did it come to apply specifically to a sweet (or ice) on a stick.

By 1788 the word had made its way into Francis Grose’s *A Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue*, where it is defined as “Lollypops: Sweet lozenges purchased by children.”

PASTA HISTORY

1642: Rome

The pope approved the charter of the *Universitas et Ars Vermicellariorum*, thus setting up an independent guild of pasta makers. For almost half a century they

had been in conflict with the guild of bakers, but they had by this time become sufficiently powerful to make a claim for independence.

1810: USA

Thomas Jefferson received a letter from Gordon, Trokes & Co. in response to a query about the availability of pasta (*see* December 30): “[T]he only Maccaroni in town is held by Mr LeForest which he says came directly from Italy, he asks 4/6 [per] lb which so much exceeds the price mentioned by you that we supposed it would be best to acquaint you of it before purchasing.”

CHAMPAGNE RIOTS

1911: France

In the wake of several years of disastrous crop losses (due largely to *phylloxera* infestation), and in the belief that their livelihoods were being further endangered by wine makers buying grapes from outside of the region, grape growers in the famous champagne-producing region of Epernay rioted on a number of occasions in 1910–1911. On January 17, 1911, led by the mayor of Venteuin carrying the red flag of revolution, they attacked the Perrier cellars at Epernay, destroying thousands of bottles of what they believed was fraudulent champagne. Sparkling wines produced from grapes grown outside a strictly defined region of Epernay, no matter how good they may be, are not entitled by law to be called “champagne.”

FOOD & WAR

1900: South Africa, Boer War

From *The Diary of a Doctor's Wife* during the siege of Kimberley, by Winifred Heberden:

Jack went out very early this morning with his Ambulance men and the troops, and they got within shelling distance of the Boers at Tollpan towards Olifantsfontein before the enemy discovered them. . . . In the afternoon we went to some excellent sports at the Artillery Camp, and much enjoyed some delicious large peaches and grapes sent by Mr Rhodes

to the Officers' Mess Room, where tea, and drinks for the men were also provided.

Apropos of the latter, whisky has now quite disappeared in Kimberley as did French brandy some time ago, though a few gentlemen manage to produce a little on special occasions from some inner chamber known only to themselves! We still get Cape brandy, soda water, ginger-beer, and hopbeer; and the chemists make a compound they call "Lime Juice". Mr Labram, when implored at the Club to try and make them some whisky, instead of more guns, said he thought he might try with a few wood-shavings!

FOOD & THE LAW

1475: Paris, France

An edict of the provost of Paris granted the *charcutiers-saucissiers-boudiniers* exclusive right to sell cooked and prepared pork meat (and seafish and red herrings) during Lent. Formerly many butchers had sold cooked and salted meat, although this was in breach of their charter. Until the regulations were changed in 1513, the charcutiers could not obtain and kill the pigs themselves but had to purchase the meat from the butchers. When the law changed, it no longer became worthwhile for butchers to deal in pork, and they gradually relinquished this part of their business. In 1664, the regulations again changed, and the charcutiers were forced to buy their pigs at least twenty-one leagues from Paris.

The various specialists within the meat trade were strictly controlled at the time, and although they were all included in the butchers' guild, each group was forbidden to produce goods outside of those specified in their individual charters.

LE PUY LENTILS

1936: France

Le Puy lentils received their "designation of origin" status. The designation may only be applied to lentils from the commune of Le Puy in the Haute-Loire region of south-central France, where they have been an important crop since ancient Roman times.

roman times.

Le Puy lentils are small, blue-green lentils which are considered by many to be the best in the world. They have a unique, slightly peppery taste and are sometimes referred to as “poor man’s caviar.” Le Puy lentils take a little longer to cook than other lentils but hold their shape well when cooked and so are useful in salads.

PROHIBITION

1920: USA

Prohibition began when the Volstead Act came into force on this day. Prohibition lasted 13 years, 10 months, 19 days, 17 hours, and 32 ½ minutes, ending with the repeal of the act on December 5, 1933.

Officially the country may have been “dry” for all of this time, but, not surprisingly perhaps given the historical and cultural role of alcohol in the nation, it was far from alcohol-free in practice. Some historians believe that alcohol consumption actually increased and that the number of drinking establishments may have as much as doubled.

There was widespread disregard for the law at every level, and lawbreaking was facilitated by a massive increase in corruption and in large-scale organized crime. Human ingenuity being what it is, legal loopholes were found and exploited. For example, alcohol could be prescribed for medical reasons, making doctors very popular as friends and house-guests. Home distilleries were built in secret, and every possible fermentable agent was tried. A clever commercial maneuver which took advantage of another loophole in the law was the sale of a “grape brick” of compressed dried fruit being sold with an attached packet of yeast which carried a “warning” that if it was added to the grape juice, “fermentation might result.”

A few restaurants survived what was the death-knell for many (including Delmonico’s of New York). Some restaurants cleverly indicated the availability of alcohol to well-known patrons by a discreet notice called an *entre nous* (between ourselves) slipped into the spine of the menu book. One such was the Biltmore, which listed Cocktail Los Angeles, Solera Theresa, Montebello, Crement Brut Chatreuse 1869, Fine Champagne Courvoisier V.V.O. 1848, and

Perfection Scotch on its little notice.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769: Tierra del Fuego

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks. Banks, Dr. Solander, their servants, and two seamen to assist with carrying their baggage had set off the previous day to explore the inland of Tierra del Fuego. By the end of this first day they were in trouble. Banks wrote (on the 16th):

[P]rovision we had none but one vulture which had been shot while we were out, and at the shortest allowance could not furnish half a meal: and to compleat our misfortunes we were caught in a snow storm in a climate we were utterly unaquainted with but which we had reason to beleive was as inhospitable as any in the world.

Early the next morning, January 17, with two of their party already dead due to the severe conditions, they ate the vulture.

[W]e agreed to dress our vulture and prepare ourselves to set out for the ship as soon as the snow should be a little more gone off: so he was skinnd and cut into ten equal shares, every man cooking his own share which furnishd about 3 mouthfulls of hot meat, all the refreshment we had had since our cold dinner yesterday and all we were to expect till we should come to the ship.

1910: Canada, The Lost Patrol

On December 21, 1910, a small group of Royal Northwest Mounted Police set off on a routine trip from Fort McPherson, Northwest Territories, to Dawson City, Yukon—a journey of 620 miles. The team of four men, led by Inspector Francis Joseph Fitzgerald, had three sleds, fifteen dogs, and food enough for a month—more than enough for the journey. Unfortunately the men never made it. They became lost and turned back for home, but severe weather, exhaustion, and lack of food took their toll. The last entry in Fitzgerald's diary was on February 5, 1911. On this day he wrote:

Twenty-three below. . . . We have now only ten pounds of flour, and eight

pounds of bacon and some dried fish. My last hope is gone, and the only thing I can do is to return and kill some of the dogs to feed the others and ourselves, unless we can meet some Indians.

JANUARY 18

FOOD & WAR

1918: USA, World War I

President Woodrow Wilson (1856–1924) issued a proclamation calling for voluntary meatless, porkless, and wheatless days and meals each week.

A Conservation Proclamation by the President

Many causes have contributed to create the necessity for a more intensive effort on the part of our people to save food in order that we may supply our associates in the war with the sustenance vitally necessary to them in these days of privation and stress. The reduced productivity of Europe because of the large diversion of man power to the war, the partial failure of harvests, and the elimination of the more distant markets for foodstuffs through the destruction of shipping, places the burden of their subsistence very largely on our shoulders.

The Food Administration has formulated suggestions which, if followed, will enable us to meet this great responsibility without any real inconvenience on our part.

In order that we may reduce our consumption of wheat and wheat products by 30 per cent—a reduction imperatively necessary to provide the supply for overseas—wholesalers, jobbers, and retailers should purchase and resell to their customers only 70 per cent of the amounts used in 1917. All manufacturers of alimentary pastes, biscuits, crackers, pastry, and breakfast cereals should reduce their purchases and consumption of wheat and wheat flour to 70 per cent of their 1917 requirements and all bakers of bread and rolls to 80 per cent of their current requirements. Consumers should reduce their purchases of wheat products for home preparation to at most 70 per cent of those of last year, or, when buying bread, should purchase mixed cereal breads from the bakers.

CEREAL BREADS FROM THE BAKERS.

To provide sufficient cereal food, homes, public eating places, dealers, and manufacturers should substitute potatoes, vegetables, corn, barley, oats, and rice products, and the mixed cereal bread and other products of the bakers which contain an admixture of other cereals.

In order that consumption may be restricted to this extent, Mondays and Wednesdays should be observed as WHEATLESS DAYS each week, and one meal each day should be observed as a WHEATLESS MEAL. In both homes and public eating places, in order to reduce the consumption of beef, pork, and sheep products, Tuesday should be observed as a meatless day in each week, one meatless meal should be observed in each day; while, in addition, Saturday in each week should further be observed as a day upon which there should be no consumption of pork products.

A continued economy in the use of sugar will be necessary until later in the year.

It is imperative that all waste and unnecessary consumption of all sorts of foodstuffs should be rigidly eliminated.

The maintenance of the health and strength of our own people is vitally necessary at this time, and there should be no dangerous restriction of the food supply; but the elimination of every sort of waste and the substitution of other commodities of which we have more abundant supplies for those which we need to save will in no way impair the strength of our people and will enable us to meet one of the most pressing obligations of the war.

I, therefore, in the national interest, take the liberty of calling upon every loyal American to take fully to heart the suggestions which are being circulated by the Food Administration and of begging that they be followed. I am confident that the great body of our women who have labored so loyally in cooperation with the Food Administration for the success of food conservation will strengthen their efforts and will take it as a part of their burden in this period of national service to see that the above suggestions are observed throughout the land.

WOODROW WILSON.

THE WHITE HOUSE.

January 18, 1918

Corn Saved the Pilgrims and Fed Our Pioneers
Corn Will Help Us Feed the World

EAT MORE CORN

CORN MEAL-HOMINY GRITS-SAMP

THE NATION'S MOST ABUNDANT CEREAL

Palatable and Nutritious in itself
The Best and Most Available Substitute for Wheat

MUFFINS Ingredients of Cornmeal, water, salt, yeast, sugar, and butter. Directions: 1. Mix together 1 cup of cornmeal, 1/2 cup of water, 1/2 teaspoon of salt, 1/2 cup of yeast, and 1/4 cup of butter. 2. Knead well. 3. Bake in a hot oven for 15 minutes.	YEAST-BREAD  Directions: 1. Mix together 1 cup of cornmeal, 1/2 cup of water, 1/2 teaspoon of salt, 1/2 cup of yeast, and 1/4 cup of butter. 2. Knead well. 3. Bake in a hot oven for 15 minutes.	HEALTHY DRINKS Ingredients: 1. 1/2 cup of cornmeal 2. 1/2 cup of water 3. 1/2 cup of yeast 4. 1/4 cup of sugar 5. 1/4 cup of butter Directions: 1. Mix together 1/2 cup of cornmeal, 1/2 cup of water, 1/2 cup of yeast, 1/4 cup of sugar, and 1/4 cup of butter. 2. Knead well. 3. Bake in a hot oven for 15 minutes.
WHEAT-BREAD Ingredients: 1. 1/2 cup of cornmeal 2. 1/2 cup of water 3. 1/2 cup of yeast 4. 1/4 cup of sugar 5. 1/4 cup of butter Directions: 1. Mix together 1/2 cup of cornmeal, 1/2 cup of water, 1/2 cup of yeast, 1/4 cup of sugar, and 1/4 cup of butter. 2. Knead well. 3. Bake in a hot oven for 15 minutes.	FIFTY WAYS OF COOKING CORN	
		

EAT SOME CORN TO-DAY

The United States Department of Agriculture will furnish you with recipes for using corn

FOR BREAKFAST, LUNCHEON, DINNER

For health in eating, delicious, nourishing, economical, and it gives you the feeling of eating a good dinner to your taste

—WITH THANKS TO THE BARNARD BROS. CO.—

The United States Department of Agriculture will send you the following recipe: "Corn Meal as a Food and Wheat as a Flour, etc." This recipe gives complete directions for making all the dishes mentioned, and many others.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, WASHINGTON, D. C.

TRY A WHEATLESS MEAL TO-MORROW

Image of Wheatless Poster

(Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, [Reproduction number e.g., LC-USZC4-7925])

Herbert Hoover was the head of the US Food Administration, and within days of the announcement, the word “hooverize” appeared in the press to signify economizing in the use of food, and it immediately entered common usage. Valentine’s Day cards in 1918 carried the words “I can Hooverize on dinner. And on lights and fuel too. But I’ll never learn to Hooverize when it comes to loving you.”

War Bread: Barley and Ground Oatmeal Bread

Ground oatmeal, 1 cup

Fat, 2 tablespoons

Barley Flour, 4½ cups

Salt, 1 teaspoonful

Milk and boiling water (½) 1¾ cups Egg, 1

Yeast Cake, 1 cake

Lukewarm water, 3 tablespoons

Corn sirup, 2 tablespoons

Pour water over the oatmeal, sirup, salt, and fat. When cooled to room temperature, add the yeast, softened in lukewarm water, and the beaten egg. Add the barley flour, put into pans, let rise until double in bulk. Bake in a moderate oven 1¼ hours. Yield: 2 small loaves.

—*Daily Menus for War Service* (New York, 1918), by Thetta Quay Franks

1943: USA, World War II

Commercial bakeries were banned from selling sliced bread as of this day. The order was made by Claude R. Wickard, the food administrator, in an effort to conserve both wheat and paper. The justification given was that “the ready-sliced loaf must have a heavier wrapping than an unsliced one if it is not to dry out.” Presliced bread also dries out more quickly, and it was believed that housewives often threw away dried, stale bread, which represented a waste of wheat.

The ban was extremely unpopular with housewives as well as bakeries, but they did not have to put up with the situation for long. On March 8, 1943, the order was rescinded, with these words from Wickard:

The order prohibiting the slicing of bread was aimed at effecting economies in the manufacture of bread and the use of paper. Our experience with the order, however, leads us to believe that the savings are not as much as we expected, and the War Production Board tells us that sufficient wax paper to wrap sliced bread for four months is in the hands of paper processors and the baking industry.

1945: Germany, World War II

A Royal Air Force (RAF) POW wrote of the evacuation of Stalag Luft VII in his diary:

Rations issued: 1/7th tin of meat, 2/3rd loaf of bread, 1/8 lb margarine. 1/4 lb honey, 2 cheeses. This to last two and a half days if we march—4 days if transport is by train. All contents of food parcels shared amongst our combine of 18. My share—tin of cocoa, packet tea, tin sausages and some margarine.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1770: Tahiti

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks:

“*Totarra nue*” . . . In turning a point today we saw a man in a small canoe fishing who to our surprize shewd not the least fear of us. We went to him

and quite alongside his Canoe, he all the while following his occupation. On our desiring him he took up his netts and shewd us his machine, which was a circular net about 7 or 8 feet in diameter extended by 2 hoops; the top of this was open and to the bottom was tied sea Ears *etc.* as bait; this he let down upon the ground and when he thought that fish enough were assembled over it he lifted it up by very gentle and even motion, so that the fish were hardly sensible of being lifted till they were almost out of the water. By this simple method he had caught abundance of fish and I beleive it is the general way of Fishing all over this coast, as many such netts have been seen at almost every place we have been in. In this bay indeed fish were so plenty that it is hardly possible not to catch abundance whatever way is made use of.

In the course of this days excursion we shot many shaggs from their nests in the trees and on the rocks. These birds we roast or stew and think not bad provisions, so between shaggs and fish this is the place of the greatest plenty of any we have seen.

JANUARY 19

INAUGURATION MENU

1945: USA

The inauguration dinner for Franklin D. Roosevelt (1882–1945) as president and Harry S. Truman as vice president was held at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, DC. The following is the menu:

Terrapin Soup with Sherry en Tasse

Fried Puff Pastry

Celery Olives Nuts

Filet of Sole, Belle Meuniere

Great Western Special Reserve.

Breast of Capon on Smithfield Ham, Southern Style

alternate

Baked Half Lobster Thermidor

New Stringless Beans Sweet Potato with Apples, Winchester

Salade Rose Marie

(Hearts of Romaine with Alligator Pear and Grapefruit, Lorenzo Dressing)

Cheese Wafers

Coupe Tortoni with Chocolate Mousse

Moka Cream Cake

Demi Tasse

Cigarettes and Havana Cigars

Lorenzo dressing is said to be named for the waiter at the famous 21 Club in New York who invented it. It is commonly served with alligator pear (avocado), as in the menu above. There are many variations of the recipe, but it is essentially a vinaigrette-type dressing with the crucial additions of chili sauce and chopped watercress.

Lorenzo Dressing

- ½ c. chili sauce
- 1 tsp. salt
- ½ c. salad oil
- ½ c. vinegar
- ½ c. chopped watercress (if obtainable)

Combine chili sauce and salt in bowl; beat in oil gradually; add vinegar, slowly beating it in also. Add watercress or parsley, chill and serve. Grated onion may be added if liked, and a few grains of sugar.

—*Madison Wisconsin State Journal*, October 17, 1944

“THERE IS DEATH IN THE POT”

1820: Britain

Frederick Accum (1769–1838) was a German-born chemist living in Britain, and on this day in 1820 he completed his highly influential book *A Treatise on Adulterations of Food and Culinary Poisons*.

Accum was rigorous in his explanations of the deceits and dangers that were common practices of the day, uncompromising in his accusations, and also named names. The title page of the book had a highly graphic image of a skull and crossbones, and the biblical phrase “There is Death in the Pot” (2 Kings 4:38–41).

The book was an instant sell-out, but almost immediately Accum began receiving threats from his “hidden enemies.” The book gave great impetus to an increasingly vocal protest about the practices he outlined, but it was not until 1860 that legislative changes (in the form of the first British Food and Drugs Act) were made.

Some of the food adulteration methods he exposed were:

- Coffee bulked out with chicory, acorns, or field beet

- Tea commonly adulterated with sloe leaves, ash leaves, and elder leaves, and green tea colored with copper salts
- Beer laced with green vitriol (sulphate of iron) to give it a good frothy head
- Cocoa powder containing brick dust
- Pickles colored green by highly poisonous copper sulphate
- Sweets and cakes colored with salts of copper and lead (also highly poisonous)
- Bread containing alum (potassium aluminium sulphate) to make bread made from inferior flour appear whiter and lighter. Bread was also known to be adulterated with gypsum, chalk, and pipe clay.
- Table wine given a *nutty* flavor by the inclusion of bitter almonds (which contain prussic acid)
- The rind of Gloucester cheese given its rich orange color by the addition of red lead (another poison)

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1825: USA

Thomas Kensett and his father-in-law, Ezra Daggett of New York, were granted the first U.S. patent for a method of canning food. Patent No. 4,009X was for “A method of preserving animal substances” in “vessels of tin.”

Kensett was an Englishman familiar with the fledgling industry in Europe when he moved to America and set up a small canning business in New York in 1812. He and his father-in-law began advertising their provisions in tin cans in 1822, but they did not take out a patent until 1825. Initially, Kensett had used glass jars for preserving, but they were expensive and broke easily.

New developments in making tin plate made the move to using this material much more feasible, but cans were still very heavy. Each one was made individually, by hand, and as there were no can openers, the cans had to be opened with brute force and whatever tools were to hand—military men finding

their bayonets useful for the task.

The canning industry was given a huge boost some decades later as a result of the American Civil War and the necessity to supply large numbers of troops.

1869: USA

William Davis, a fish dealer in Detroit, Michigan, was granted Patent No. 85,913 for an “Improvement in Freezing-Box for Fish, etc.” His invention consisted of a metal box capable of expanding or contracting in size “according to the size of what is to be frozen in it, but of such a size that the cover will always come into contact with the contents.”

As evidence for the usefulness of his invention, Davis claimed:

It is a well-known fact that fish frozen immediately after being taken from the water alive, can be kept frozen for a long time, and when placed in water again, and slowly thawed, the fish so frozen, will return to life and animation again. It is also well known that when fish are frozen, they can be more easily and thoroughly scaled and dressed than when not frozen.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1663: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys. He is impressed by his friend’s labeled and bottle wine.

By coach to Mr. Povys, being invited thither by a messenger this morning from him—where really, he made a most excellent and large dinner, even to admiration; he bidding us in a frolique to call for what we had a mind and he would undertake to give it us—and we did, for prawns—Swan—venison after I had thought the dinner was quite done, and he did immediately produce it, which I thought great plenty. . . . But above all things he bid me go down into his wine-cellar, where upon several shelves there stood bottles of all sorts of wine, new and old, with labells pasted upon each bottle, and in that order and plenty as I never saw books in a bookseller’s shop.

The storing of wine in glass bottles was a relatively new phenomenon in the

1660s in England. Wine consumption was increasing rapidly in the second half of the seventeenth century, thanks in part to the influence of Charles II, who had spent years in exile in Europe during the Civil War and Commonwealth periods and had returned with European tastes. Technological developments in the glass industry also made the bottling of wine a more general and feasible option (as also did the cork wine stopper, another timely innovation).

Pepys's comments suggest that Povys's wine was also being matured in the bottles, not merely temporarily stored in them. At that time, it was most usual for a household to buy and store wine in the cask, decanting it as wanted.

By October that same year, Pepys—ever the one to be fashionable and up to date—mentions in his diary having some dozens of his own bottles filled with wine. During the Great Fire of London in 1666, he buried some of his wine in his garden to protect it from destruction (see September 4).

1763: London, England

James Boswell, the biographer of Samuel Johnson, and some friends decided on a whim to walk from one end of London to the other, dine at Dolly's Beefsteak house, and be at the theater in time to see the new play *Elvira*.

[W]e set out at ten (from Hyde Park corner). . . . We eat an excellent breakfast at the Somerset Coffee-house . . . went half a mile beyond the turnpike at Whitechapel, which completed our course, and went into a little public house and drank some warm white wine with aromatic spices, pepper and cinnamon . . . We had a room to ourselves (at Dolly's), and a jolly profusion of smoking juicy beefsteaks. I eat like a very Turk, or indeed like a very John Bull, whose supreme joy is good beef. We had some port, and had drunk damnation to the play and eternal remorse to the author. We then went to the Bedford Coffee-house and had coffee and tea; and just as the doors opened at four o'clock, we sailed into the house (theatre).

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1854: Africa

David Livingstone, on his great trans-African journey, was visiting a local

DAVID LIVINGSTONE, ON HIS GREAT TRANS-AMERICAN JOURNEY, WAS VISITING A LOCAL chieftain.

When we arrived he had a fowl in his hand ready to present, together with a calabash of mead. On my asking what remedy he would suggest for fever, he answered: “Drink plenty of strong mead. As it gets in it will drive the fever out.” It was rather strong, and I suspect he liked the remedy pretty well, though he had no fever.

JANUARY 20

SAINT SEBASTIAN’S DAY

In the city of San Sebastian, in northern Spain, in Basque country, a festival called *La Tamborrada* takes place on this day. As soon the first stroke of midnight is heard, members of the city’s dining clubs take to the streets, dressed in militaria regalia, and begin twenty-four hours of intense banging of drums and general hilarity.

No one knows for certain how the tradition started, but the popular legend is that when the city was being invaded, the cooks joined the regimental drummers, using their pots and pans as instruments, and the noise convinced the invaders that the defending army was huge—so they retreated.

Cooking (and eating) are certainly extremely important to the Basques. There is a long-standing tradition of menonly gastronomical associations called *txokos* (the word means “corners”), and there are many hundreds of these in towns and villages around the country. Only recently have women been allowed to join the clubs; in the past the only day they were allowed to attend was on Saint Sebastian’s Day.

INAUGURAL LUNCHEON

1961: USA

The inauguration luncheon for President John F. Kennedy (1917–1963) and Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson was held in the U.S. Senate Restaurant in the Capitol on this day.

Cream of Tomato Soup with Crushed Popcorn

Deviled Crabmeat Imperial

New England Boiled Stuffed Lobster with
Drawn Butter

Prime Texas Ribs of Beef au jus

String Beans Amandine Broiled Tomato

Grapefruit and Avocado Sections with
Poppyseed Dressing

Hot Garlic Bread Butterflake Rolls

Pâtisserie Bateau Blanche

Mints Coffee

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia: "A sleeping lizard with a blunt tail and knobby scales, fell into our hands, and was of course roasted and greedily eaten."

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1660: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys: “At noon went by water with Mr. Maylard and Hales to the Swan in Fishstreete at our colly-feast, where we were very merry at our Jole of ling. And from thence, after a great and good dinner of fish.”

Colly-feast: The *Oxford English Dictionary* does not have a definition of *colly-feast*, but it is likely related to *cully* (etymology uncertain), which is defined as “a man, fellow; a companion, mate”—and presumably *colleague*. It seems, then, that a colly-feast was an early version of a boys-only meal. Other sources suggest that a feature of a colly-feast is that each participant pays his share.

Jole of ling: A “jole” is a jowl, or a jaw, but in the case of fish (especially salmon, sturgeon, and ling) usually refers to the “head and shoulders.” The jole used to be considered a delicacy in England, as it still is in other parts of the world.

Ling (*Molva molva*), is a large member of the cod family and is considered very fine eating.

1889: England

An undergraduate at Christ Church, Oxford, wrote to the steward, complaining about the food: “Mr Fox-Tarrant Begs to mention that he received a partridge the other (evening) so high as to be uneatable, and hopes this will not happen again.”

Many aficionados prefer their game “high”—that is, with some degree of decomposition already in place. Decomposition breaks down the tissues and hence tenderizes the flesh (which is more important in wild birds compared to domestically fattened animals), and it also increases the gamey flavour. The desirable degree of decomposition depends on acquired taste and personal preference. Brillat-Savarin (1755–1826) said that in the case of the pheasant, the best time to eat it was when decomposition was just beginning: “At this time its aroma is developing in association with an oil which requires slight fermentation to be given off.” His contemporary, Grimod de la Reyniere, however, believed that “a pheasant killed on Ash Wednesday should not be eaten until Easter.”

There are as many opinions on the subject as there are gourmands and cookery book writers.

As all these birds are improved by hanging several days, and when received it is often not known how long they have been killed, it is recommended to tie a bit of string round the long tail feathers, and hang the bird up by that. When it is fit to dress the feathers will give way.

—*The Housekeeper's Guide: or, A Plain & Practical System of Domestic Cookery* (1838), by Esther Copley

Partridge . . . Choose young birds with dark-coloured bills and yellowish legs, and let them hang a few days, or there will be no flavour to the flesh, nor will it be tender. The time they should be kept entirely depends on the taste of those for whom they are intended, as what some persons would consider delicious would be to others disgusting and offensive.

—*Mrs Beeton's Dictionary of Everyday Cookery* (1865)

JANUARY 21

THE ELAND DINNER

1859: England

Frank Buckland (1826–1880) was an English surgeon and natural historian who became notorious for his enthusiasm for zoophagy. There was nothing that Buckland would not try, and he recorded his impressions of his experimental dishes in his journal. He ate, among many other things, rhinoceros, viper, mice, elephant trunk (“rubbery”), bluebottle (“unspeakable”), and mole (“utterly horrible”). On one occasion, hearing that a panther had died at the Surrey Zoological Gardens, he had it exhumed after it had been buried a couple of days and ate some of it, saying afterward, however, that “It was not good.”

In his journal of January 21, 1859, he recorded the details of a meal which was to become famous as “the Eland Dinner.” It was after this meal that Buckland was instrumental in forming the Acclimatisation Society in Britain, a major goal of which (presumably to Buckland at any rate) was to discover potential new foods from the animal kingdom.

On January 21, 1859, I had the good fortune to be invited to a dinner, which will, I trust, hereafter form the date of an epoch in natural history; I mean

the now celebrated eland dinner, when, for the first time, the freshly killed haunch of this African antelope was placed on the table of the London Tavern. . . . It was indeed a zoological dinner to which each of the four points of the compass had sent its contribution, We had a large pike from the East; American partridges shot but a few days ago in the dense woods of the Transatlantic West; a wild goose, probably a young bean goose, from the North.

PARMESAN CHEESE

1536: Italy

The elders of the region of Reggio-Emilia were a little indignant when they heard on this day that one of their citizens, Antonio Patacino, had been “compelled to pay duty on some Parmigiano-Reggiano he was taking with him into the Republic of Venice.” Parmigiano-Reggiano (Parmesan) is a raw cow’s milk cheese that has been made since at least the thirteenth century. It received European Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) status in 1995.

Parmesan cheese is enormously popular worldwide. Samuel Pepys thought so much of it (and probably paid so much for it) that he buried his supply of it to save it from the Great Fire of London (*see* September 4). Benjamin Franklin was also a great fan of the cheese (*see* July 9).

FOOD & THE MEDIA

1937: England

Xavier Marcel Boulestin (1878–1943) became the first television cook. He was a French chef who moved to England in 1906 and began what became a very successful career as a restaurateur, food writer, and celebrity chef. In the first episode of his BBC program *Cook’s Night Out* he demonstrated how to make an omelette. This might seem a rather simplistic choice, but it seems that Boulestin felt very strongly about the dish and how badly it was prepared by the English. He gave detailed instructions for the correct preparation in his book *What Shall We Have Today?*, published in 1931.

Omelettes

The ambition of many cooks, especially amateur cooks, is to make a good omelette. It is, of course, very difficult to describe properly exactly how an omelette is made, but I will try to give at least a few rules which, if faithfully followed, will in time lead to satisfactory results.

I must first of all state that all the English theories about omelette-making are wrong. The whites and yolks of eggs are not beaten separately; there is no water, no cream or milk added to the mixture; an omelette which is “as light as a feather” has none of the qualities required of the omelette. It may be a very good dish, but it is not an omelette.

There are two things absolutely necessary—a thick cast-iron pan and a good fire; a thin steel pan is no use whatsoever. This pan should be kept well-greased, and, if possible, not used for cooking anything but omelettes. And the pan must be extremely hot; here is the secret. I mean so hot that when you put in the piece of butter or of pork fat it must smoke at once and almost catch fire. Now if you have a thick iron pan and leave it empty on the fire for half an hour before using it, you are almost certain to succeed in making an omelette (I cannot emphasise this point too much). The pan must be so hot that the omelette can be cooked in it off the fire simply by the heat retained in the metal, in a few seconds. An experienced chef will do it like that, and without using a fork, simply by manipulating the pan, tapping it, shaking it till the omelette falls on the plate beautifully folded, and not even browned, soft, yet firm.

But as we are not all experienced chefs the best way is to use a fork. The moment our mixture is in the pan (remember it starts cooking immediately, so do not lose a second) stir it vigorously, passing the fork under the eggs and all round, gathering them so to speak.

Hold the pan with the left hand, tilting it away from you. Bang the handle hard with the right hand, which helps the omelette to slip to the end of the pan. Then with the fork fold it and give it its proper shape, one side of it being the curved end of the pan away from you. By this time the omelette is already almost out of the pan. Hold a hot dish in one hand, vertically and close to the pan, which you turn over; the omelette slides onto the dish ready, and, let us hope, perfect.

FOOD & WAR.

1919: France, World War I

Future president Harry S. Truman (1884–1972) was on active military duty in France, and while he was away he wrote regularly to his sweetheart and future wife, Bess Wallace.

Camp La Beholle, near Verdun

Dear Bess,

. . . For my part I've had enough *vin rouge* and frog eater victuals to last me a lifetime. And anyway it looks to me like the moonshine business is going to be pretty good in the land of Liberty loans and green trading stamps, and some of us want to get in on the ground floor. At least we want to get there in time to lay in a supply for future consumption. I think a quart of bourbon would last me about forty years.

1945: Germany, World War II

A Royal Air Force POW wrote of the evacuation of Stalag Luft VII in his diary: "We had covered 41 Km. in some 24 hours. Shelter in Stables and cow sheds. Stench forgotten as we welcomed the warmth. Issued with 40 dog biscuits and cup of coffee (acorn)."

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1975: USA

Earl Patterson, of the University of Illinois, was granted Patent No. 3,861,079 for "Procedures for use of genic male sterility in production of commercial hybrid maize." This was the first utility seed patent granted.

Utility patents "may be granted to anyone who invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, article of manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof." A plant patent was not applicable in this case as they are granted for the invention or discovery and asexual reproduction of a distinct and new variety of plant.

THE PINEAPPLE

1813: Hawaii

An early reference to the cultivation of pineapple occurs in the journal of Don Francisco de Paula y Marin (1774–1837), who wrote “This day I planted PineApples and an Orange tree.” Marin was a Spaniard who arrived in Hawaii (reputedly as a deserter from a Spanish ship) and became a friend and adviser to King Kamehameha I. He was a man of many talents, although he was probably not formally trained in any of the occupations he pursued.

There is no doubt that Marin was an enthusiastic horticulturalist, and in many sources he is credited with introducing the pineapple to Hawaii, presumably on account of his journal entry for this day. There were, in fact, pineapples on the islands before this date, and Marin may well have been instrumental in their adoption as a significant and ultimately commercially successful crop.

JANUARY 22

SAINT VINCENT OF SARAGOSSA

Saint Vincent is the patron saint of wine growers. His feast day (or the closest Sunday) is particularly celebrated in the wine-growing regions of Europe. In the champagne region of France, his statue is carried in a procession to the church, where barrels of the new wine are blessed. A cart full of brioches is also blessed, and the sweet bread and champagne are distributed freely to all present.

RAILWAY FOOD FOR A RUSSIAN DUKE

1872: Topeka, Kansas, USA

Grand Duke Alexei of Russia, the son of Tsar Alexander II, was touring America by train. A dinner in his honor was provided at the Fifth Avenue Hotel on this day as he passed through Topeka. The menu for the dinner was published in the *Kansas Daily Commonwealth*.

BILL OF FARE.

SOUP.

Oyster, a la Possiet, Chicken, with Rice.

FISH.

Boiled White Fish, a la Maitre d'Hotel.

BOILED.

Pressed Corned Beef, Leg of Mutton, Caper Sauce,

Chicken, Egg Sauce, Ham, Pickled Pork, Tongue.

COLD.

Corn Beef, Pork, Chicken Salad, Ham, Lobster Salad, Calf's Tongue.

RELISHES.

Chow-chow, Pickled Lilly, Mixed Pickles, Cauliflower,

Gherkins, Club Sauce, Worcestershire Sauce,

Pickled Oysters, Celery, Cheese.

GAME.

Buffalo, Rabbit, Venison, Moose, Squirrel, Elk, Bear, Quail,

Duck, Turkey, Prairie Chicken, Antelope.

ENTRIES.

Chicken Wings, Fricassed,

Queen Fritters, a la Princess,

Pigs Feet, Breaded,

Scalloped Oysters, a la Stanton,

Quail on Toast,

Rabbits, a la Chasseur,

Tenderloin of Beef, a la Royal,

Oyster Patties, a la Rhine,

Macaroni, aux Graton,

Rice Croquettes, with Jelly,

Prince Albert Pancakes, with Quince Jelly,

Platons of Chicken Liver, a la Bonaparte,

Haricot of Mutton, a la Bourgoise,

Squirrel, Crumbled and Fried,

Deviled Ham, a la Italienne.

ROAST.

Turkey, Cranberry Sauce, Leg of Mutton,

Mallard Duck, a la Matelote, Ribs of Beef,

Chicken, Oyster Dressing, Buffalo, Brown Sauce,

Ham, Champagne Sauce, Antelope, Grape Jelly,

Elk, Currant Jelly.

VEGETABLES.

Boiled Potatoes, Green Peas, String Beans,

Parsnips, Lima Beans, Tomatoes, Hominy,

Mashed Potatoes, Brown Potatoes, Cabbage,

Mashed Turnips, Succotash, Corn.

PASTRY AND PUDDING.

Plum Pie, Strawberry Pie, Mince Pie, Peach Pie,

Pound Cake Pudding, Cranberry Tarts, Fruit Cake, Ornamented,

Cranberry Pie, Gold Cake, Jelly Roll, Pound Cake,

Iced and Ornamented,

Drop Kisses, Coconut Tops,

Rose Jelly Cake, Lady Fingers,

Silver Cake, Marble Cake, Leopard Cake.

DESSERT.

Vanilla Ice Cream, Almonds, Oranges, Pecans,

Apples, Wine Jelly, Crab Apple Jelly, Brandy Jelly,

Quince Jelly. French Coffee, Tea.

FOOD & DIPLOMACY

1735: Britain

An entry in the expenditure books of a government department notes one of the costs incurred in hosting a diplomatic visitor: “To accommodate *Mons. Chavigni*, the French King’s minister here, as to his chocolate and champagne.”

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1837: London, England

William Tayler was a footman in the house of a rich Mayfair widow. In his diary entry on this day he gave a description of the servants’ meals:

This being Sunday of course I went to church. I think I will give an account of our living during the next week. They breakfast at eight in the kitchen on bread and butter and toast—or anything of the kind if they like to be at the trouble of making it—and tea. All most all servants are obliged to find their own tea and sugar. For my own part I care very little about breakfast at all, therefore I jenerally wait until the breakfast comes down from the parlour at ten o'clock when my apatite has come and I can then git a cup of coco, which I am very fond of, and a rowl [roll] or something of the kind. Anyone can have lunch, it is there for them, but, as I have breakfast so late, I want no lunch. This day we had for dinner a piece of sirloin of beef, roasted; broccoli and potatoes and preserved damson pie. We all have tea together at four o'clock with bread and butter and sometimes cake. At nine o'clock we have supper; this evening it's cold beef and damson pie. We keep plenty of very good tale ale in the house and everyone can have as much as they like.

JANUARY 23

TO BE AN ALE-TASTER

1617: England

John Shurle was granted a patent (meaning the privilege or authority) by Arthur Lake, bishop of Bath and Welles and vice-chancellor of Oxford, for the office of ale-taster to the university and for the making and assizing of bottles of hay.

The office of ale taisting requires, that he goe to every ale brewer that day they brew, according to their courses, and tast their ale: for which his ancient fee is one gallon of strong ale, and two gallons of small wort, worth a peny. The hay botles are to be made according to the price of hey; and the weight allowed by the leet, which at this time (1640) is thus: good hay beeing 20s. a load, the peny botle ought to wey 3lb.

FOOD & WAR

1945: Germany, World War II

An RAF POW wrote of the evacuation of Stalag Luft VII in his diary: “Food

issue—half packet Knackercrot wafer, 1/8 lb margarine. Marched from 08.45 to 11.30 hours. Germans prepared to exchange bread and cigarettes for our soup ration. Next stop Hansen (Barns)—half cup of soup. Distance today 19 km.”

ANNIVERSARY

1806: England

William Pitt “the Younger” (b. 1759), the famous British statesman and twice prime minister, died on this day. His last words were reported by some to be “Oh, my country! How I leave my country” (which was in the throes of war with Napoleon), and by others to be “I think I could eat one of Bellamy’s veal pies.”

In 1773, the deputy housekeeper, John Bellamy, set up a small private dining room in the House of Commons, and over the next sixty years it evolved into a coffee and chop house of some repute. Charles Dickens was familiar with it from his early days as a reporter. Here is an account of it, written in 1878:

Adjoining the old House of Commons was a coffee and chop house of great celebrity—indeed, it may be said of Parliamentary fame—known among the veterans of St. Stephen’s Chapel as “Bellamy’s.” Englishmen, as we all know, can do nothing without a dinner, or a luncheon, at the least; and so to “Bellamy’s,” day after day during the Parliamentary session, would repair the members of committees, witnesses, lawyers and their clients, and in the evening many of the leading M.P.’s lounged in during dull debates, making it serve the purpose of a club. “Nothing is more common,” observes a writer of the last generation, “than to adjourn upon occasions of triumphs in the Committee Rooms to Bellamy’s,” where some of the best wine that can be drunk in London, and some of the best chops and steaks that were ever sought to be cooked, almost console even a country member or a stranger for an hour or two’s imprisonment in a close room or crowded gallery. . . . The steaks are so hot, and so tender, and so accurately dressed, the old Nankin China is so inviting, and the port, the sherry, and the madeira so unexceptionable, and so excellently *bodied* for an Englishman’s palate, that really now and then a man would rather dine at “Bellamy’s” than at home. And then it is so pleasant to watch the magical skill with which grave and learned members who have just alighted from their carriages and commenced an apology for their dinner or supper, as the case may be, jump

up from their seats on hearing the “division bell” ring, and run downstairs headlong into “the House” in order to give their votes. True, they may not have heard a word of the debate, they may not know who has spoken, or what has been said in their absence; but I presume that in the House of Commons gentlemen come to vote by instinct. On many occasions have I been sipping my port in that coffee-room, and have heard the charmed bell rung, and have seen twenty members rise up, like Macbeth’s guests, in most admired disorder.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1843: Moravia

Jakub Krystof Rad, a Swiss-born Czech working at a sugar factory at Dačice in Moravia (present-day Czech Republic), was granted a patent for a press to make sugar cubes. Previous to this, sugar for domestic use was purchased in large blocks or cones which had to be chopped up or grated. The story is that one day his wife injured her finger while she was preparing some sugar and asked him if it were not possible to make the process easier.

In 1875, Eugen Langen and David Martineau developed a process by which sugar was spun in a centrifuge and then sawed into small pieces. Henry Tate (of the English company Tate & Lyle’s) bought the rights to the technology later the same year and introduced sugar cubes to Britain.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1812: USA

From the journal of Wilson Price Hunt’s overland expedition:

The area was inhabited by the Akaitchis Indians. . . . These Indians are better stocked with food than the Snakes, for it seems that dried salmon is plentiful in their homes. They gave us many fresh salmon trout that they had caught at the mouth of the Umatilla River. This is excellent fish. . . . We left on the 23rd after purchasing some fresh fish and nine dogs. The route along the river was very good. We camped that night close to a village of Indians who had about 50 canoes. I bought nine dogs that were quite fat and made a delicious dinner. Their meat seemed most savory to us.

quite fat and made a delicious dinner. Their meat seemed most savory to us, both wholesome and strengthening; on the other hand, horsemeat, however well prepared, is not nourishing, no matter how much of it one eats. The weather was beautiful and very mild, much like the beautiful days of the month of October. (12 miles)

1862: Africa



Plantain

John Hanning Speke (1827–1864) was a British army officer and African explorer. He was the first European to find the source of the Nile, at Lake Victoria, during his expedition of 1857–1862. He wrote about his expedition in *Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile*:

Maula now came again, after receiving repeated and angry messages, and I forced him to make a move. He led me straight up to his home, a very nice place, in which he gave me a very large, clean, and comfortable hut—had no end of plantains brought for me and my men—and said, “Now you have really entered the kingdom of Uganda, for the future you must buy no more food. At every place that you stop for the day, the officer in charge will bring you plantains, otherwise your men can help themselves in the gardens, for such are the laws of the land when a king’s guest travels in it. Any one found selling anything to either yourself or your men would be punished.” Accordingly, I stopped the daily issue of breads; but no sooner had I done so, than all my men declared they could not eat plantains. It was all very well, they said, for the Waganda to do so, because they were used to it, but it did not satisfy their hunger.

Plantains are members of the banana family (genus *Musa*). They are not suitable for eating raw but are usually baked or fried. They are a staple food in parts of Africa and the Caribbean.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1667: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

[H]e took us quite through the whole house and chapel and the new [Capuchin] Monastery . . . and I was in the Refectoire, where every man his napkin—knife, cup of earth—and basin of same—and a place for one to sit and read while the rest are at meals. And into the Kitchin I went, where a good neck of Mutton a the fire—and other victuals boiling—I do not think they feed very hard.

1865: California, USA

Mark Twain was at Angel's Camp, California, during the gold rush. His journal entry for today reads: "Beans and dishwater for breakfast at the Frenchman's; dishwater and beans for dinner; and both articles warmed over for supper."

1889: Oxford, England

An undergraduate at Christ Church, Oxford, sent a letter to the steward, complaining about the food: "I wish to mention that I have twice been sent Rhubarb tart when I have ordered apple, as I have a particular objection to Rhubarb tart I hope it may not occur again. I also wish to mention that the food in Hall is not what it should be."

JANUARY 24

A NEW YORK DINNER THEME

1914: New York, USA

The Lotos Club gave a dinner to John Purroy Mitchel, mayor of the city of New York. The menu had a New York theme.

Manhattan Oysters

Bronx Soup

Richmond Fish

New York Filet

Albany Sorbet

Washington Plover

Subway Salad

Brooklyn Ices

Queens Cakes

Knickerbocker Coffee

DINNER WITH THE AMBASSADOR

1682: London, England

John Evelyn attended an entertainment for the Moroccan ambassador, and in his diary he mentions the visitors drinking *jacolatt* (chocolate). This is one of the earliest mentions of chocolate in England, where it was still a curiosity. Solid “eating” chocolate was still two centuries away.

This evening I was at the entertainment of the Morocco Ambassador at the Duchess of Portsmouth’s glorious apartments at Whitehall, where was a great banquet of sweetmeats and music; but at which both the Ambassador and his retinue behaved themselves with extraordinary moderation and modesty, though placed about a long table, a lady between two Moors, and among these were the King’s natural children, namely, Lady Lichfield and Sussex, the Duchess of Portsmouth, Nelly, etc., concubines, and cattle of that sort, as splendid as jewels and excess of bravery could make them; the Moors neither admiring nor seeming to regard anything, furniture or the like, with any earnestness, and but decently tasting of the banquet. They drank a little milk and water, but not a drop of wine; they also drank of a sorbet and jacolatt; did not look about, or stare on the ladies, or express the least surprise, but with a courtly negligence in pace, countenance, and whole behavior, answering only to such questions as were asked with a great deal of wit and gallantry. . . . In a word, the Russian Ambassador, still at Court behaved himself like a clown compared to this civil heathen.

ESKIMO PIE

1922: USA

Christian K. Nelson of Onowa was granted Patent No. 1,404,539 for his new confection. This was a “commercially practical coated brick or block of ice-cream or the like” which was “in its simplest form, a block or brick or frozen confection within an edible container or shell. The core or center may be an ice cream, sherbet, sorbet, ice, or other material congealed by refrigeration.” The shell was to be of “edible material which may be like that employed in coating chocolate candies, although preferably modified to harden at a lower

chocolate candies, although preferably moulded to harden at a lower temperature.” His invention became known commercially as Eskimo Pie.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1945: USA

Percy L. Spencer, from West Newton, Massachusetts, an engineer for the Raytheon Company, was granted Patent No. 2,495,429 for a new “Method of Treating Foodstuffs.” His invention was an application of the use of electromagnetic energy for cooking—in other words, the microwave oven.

His patent application noted that “with the system I have described, I have found that an egg may be rendered hard-boiled with the expenditure of 2 kw.-sec. [kilowatts per cm³ per second].” This compares with an expenditure of 36 kw.-sec. to conventionally cook the same.

As with so many inventions, Spencer discovered his idea by accident. He was working in a lab while a magnetron was being tested and discovered that a chocolate bar in his pocket had melted. Others had noted similar phenomena, but instead of dismissing the event or assuming it to be due to the ambient temperature, Spencer became intrigued and decided to investigate.

1996: USA

The FDA approved the synthetic fat substitute olestra (brand name Olean) for use in prepackaged snack foods, on the basis that it met the safety standard for food additives, that is, that there was “reasonable certainty of no harm.” The decision has been controversial, mostly on account of safety concerns, the claims being that there has been insufficient testing, particularly of the possible long-term implications of its use. The side effects were acknowledged from the outset, with products containing olestra being required to include a warning label stating “This Product Contains Olestra. Olestra may cause abdominal cramping and loose stools. Olestra inhibits the absorption of some vitamins and other nutrients. Vitamins A, D, E, and K have been added.”

The use of the product has been declining steadily over recent years, and Procter and Gamble have indicated that they will not seek FDA approval for its use in other than snack foods.

ANNIVERSARY

1928: England

This was the birthday of Desmond (John) Morris, a zoologist and sociobiologist and author of *The Naked Ape*. Naturally, his work led to many insights into human eating behavior.

I expected (purely on statistical grounds) to die ten years ago . . . something has gone wrong with my prediction because I am still here, and I have a feeling that part of the reason could be that I have managed to maintain a deep disrespect for all the health police, the faddist gurus and the diet fascists who plague our bookstalls, radio stations and newsagents.

Observe diners arriving at any restaurant and you will see them make a bee-line for the wall seats. No one ever voluntarily selects a centre table in an open space. Open seating positions are only taken when all wall seats are occupied. This dates back to a primeval feeding practice of avoiding sudden attack during the deep concentration involved in consuming food.

LAST MEAL

1989: USA

Ted Bundy (who ate parts of his victims) was executed. He refused to order a last meal, so he was given the standard steak and eggs, but refused to eat it.

JANUARY 25

BURNS'S NIGHT

January 25 is Burns's Day, the anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns in 1759. Burns is accepted as the national poet of Scotland, and Burns's Night is celebrated across the globe by Scottish societies and by groups of individuals with Scots heritage or Scots sympathies, as is Saint Patrick's Day by those with Irish roots.

Wherever they are held in the world, there is an accepted formula for the events

of the evening:

1. Welcome by the chairman.
2. Burns's "Selkirk Grace" is said by all:

Some hae meat and cannae eat,

And some wad eat that want it.

But we hae meat and we can eat

And so the Lord be thankit.

3. The company then stands and performs a slow handclap during the piping in of the haggis. The procession consists of the piper, the chef bearing the haggis on a silver platter, the honored guest who will address the haggis, and—let he not be forgotten—the whisky bearer.
4. The honored guest recites Burns's ode "To a Haggis," with great gusto and feeling, and at the lines "His knife see Rustic-labour dight, An cut you up wi ready slight" he plunges his own knife into the haggis, spilling out its "gushing entrails."
5. At the final line "Gie her a Haggis!" ("her" being Scotland) the company applaud, raise their whisky glasses, and make a toast "To the Haggis."
6. The meal proper then commences. The haggis is compulsory, but other menu items may vary so long as they stay within the traditional Scots culinary repertoire. A common selection would be as follows:

Cock-a-leekie soup

Haggis with Bashed Neeps and Champit Taties

Cloutie Dumplin or Topsy Laird

7. A short speech on Burns is given.
8. There is a "Toast to the Lasses," and various other recitations and entertainments, accompanied by as much whisky drinking as seems

necessary and appropriate.

9. The evening ends with the traditional rendering by the company of “Auld Lang Syne.”

The Scotch Haggis

Parboil a sheep’s pluck and a piece of good lean beef. Grate the half of the liver, and mince the beef, the lights, and the remaining half of the liver. Take of good beef-suet half the weight of this mixture, and mince it with a dozen of small firm onions. Toast some oatmeal before the fire for hours, till it is of a light-brown colour, and perfectly dry. Less than two tea-cupfuls of meal will do for this meat. Spread the mince on a board, and strew the meal lightly over it, with a high seasoning of pepper, salt, and a little Cayenne, well mixed. Have a haggis-bag perfectly clean, and see that there be no thin part in it, else your whole labour will be lost by its bursting. Put in the meat with as much good beef-gravy, or strong broth, as will make it a thick stew. Be careful not to fill the bag too full, but allow the meat room to swell; add the juice of a lemon, or a little good vinegar; press out the air, and sew up the bag; prick it with a large needle, when it first swells in the pot, to prevent bursting; let it boil, but not violently, for three hours.

Obs.—This is a genuine Scotch haggis; there are, however, sundry modern refinements on the above receipt,—such as eggs, milk, pounded biscuit, &c. &c.,—but these, by good judges, are not deemed improvements.

—*The Cook and Housewife’s Manual* (Edinburgh, 1826), by Mistress Margaret Dods (pseud. of Christian Isobel Johnstone)

FOOD & WAR

1915: Germany, World War I

German authorities confiscated all supplies of grain and flour in the empire to be distributed by the government. The action was in response to the shortage of wheat and the failure of earlier appeals to the German people to voluntarily reduce their consumption of bread until the next harvest.

1945: Holland, World War II

Food supplies were so scarce in German-occupied Holland that authorities were forced to reduce the food rationing at central soup kitchens.

CHOCOLATE & THE INQUISITION

1620: The Spanish Empire

The use of chocolate was strongly identified with the Jews in early seventeenth-century Spain. They are said to have introduced chocolate to Spain and were active in its trade and use. Officers of the Inquisition took particular notice of evidence of its consumption in the individuals they investigated during their reign of terror.

On January 25, 1620, Inquisition authorities received an intriguing letter from Friar Andrés de Carrera, in which he appears to be reporting some suspicious activities on the part of the Father Guardian. It is not clear whether it is the chocolate or the “exquisite writings” which are of concern!

Father Guardian was ready to continue his journey to Sacatecas [Mexico] and after mass he left, leaving [behind] 60 tablets of chocolate [used to make the beverage] and a small cask of vinegar; also he left very exquisite writings and I kept them to show them to your Lordship, so you would decide accordingly what to do with them, because neither do I understand them nor are they for me.

PASTA

1509: Naples

An edict issued by the viceroy of the kingdom of Naples shows that the pasta industry was well established and the range of types of pasta were already very varied by this time: “When the price of flour rises because of war, or famine, or bad seasons by five *carlini* or more per *tomolo*, *taralli*, *sausamelli*, *ceppule*, *maccharune*, *trii*, *vermicelli*, or other things of pasta must not be made except in case of need for the sick.”

Penalties for breaking this law included the loss of the licence to run a business.

JELLIED FISH

1548: Germany

From the cookbook of Sabina Welserin, translated by Valoise Armstrong:

In the year of our Lord 1548 on the 25th of January the master cook Simon, cook for the counts of Leuchtenberg, instructed me to prepare jellied fish in the following manner.

First he took a pike weighing two pounds and skinned it and cut slashed notches into it and divided it into pieces. He had also previously prepared a dish with aspic [with] two trout, each weighing about one pound. He scaled them a little on the back, afterwards shaping them prettily so that the head and tail stood up high and he cooked them. He put water into a pan over the fire, let it boil, also salted it, also poured some vinegar over the trout, after that laid the trout in the broth, so that the broth covered them well, afterwards let them simmer. Do not, however, allow them to cook too quickly or else they will not stay erect. They become entirely blue. And let the trout remain in the broth for three hours and then afterwards on a pewter plate. After that he put the pike in a pan, put a little salt therein and one quart of Neckar wine and let it come to a boil. Next he put into it somewhat more than one quart of isinglass water, also saffron, pepper, sugar, as much of each as he felt was right. He let it cook very slowly over a small fire and skimmed the froth with a skimming ladle, after that strained the broth into a pot and laid the pike in a dish and let the broth run three times through a wool or canvas sack, so that it became nice and clear. Following that he poured it on the pike but did not allow the bowl to get too full and let it stand until the following day. After that he took the bowl in which he had put the two trout and poured into it about two fingers high of broth from the jellied fish. Do not over fill it. Also reserve a good part of the broth for the next day. Then prepare white, yellow, brown, black, green as follows. First the white color which is made like so: Pound almonds small and strains them with isinglass water, that is the white color. Then take the white color and color it yellow, then it is yellow. After that take trysolita, which is a brown cloth, and lay the cloth in isinglass water and wring it out, then it becomes brown. The black is made like so: Take rye bread and toast it well on a grill, then pound it into a powder and strain it

with isinglass water, then it becomes black. After that take a handful of spinach or chard and pound it in a mortar and strain it with isinglass, then it becomes green. Afterwards send it to a painter and let a bowl in which there is no fish be painted with the five colors, however you would like it, with coats of arms or plants. Everything can be eaten. The aspic should become firm beforehand, before you paint upon it. Afterwards, when that which you want has been painted, also letters, then set the two trout into it and pour the remaining broth over it, until the broth is as full as you would like it. And then let the aspic become firm, then it is ready.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1786: France

Thomas Jefferson, in Paris, wrote to his friend and former student, lawyer Archibald Stuart (1757–1832), and asked for some pecan nuts to be sent: “P.S. I must add a prayer for some Peccan nuts, 100, if possible, to be packed in a box of sand and sent me. They might come either directly or via N. York.”

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1912: Antarctica

From the journal of Robert Falcon Scott. The small party is on the return journey from the South Pole. “Thank God we found our Half Degree Depot. After lying in our bags yesterday afternoon and all night, we debated breakfast; decided to have it later and go without lunch.”

JANUARY 26

DINING WITH EMPEROR NAPOLEON

1809: France

Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte dined with the ambassadors of the Confederation of the Rhine at the Tuileries Palace on this night. Here is the menu for the sixteen guests:

Trois potages et deux relevés de potage

Potages de petits légumes au beurre

Potage de truffes—Crème de vermicelle

Filets de truites au champagne

Gratin de soles et de langoustes à la crème

Trois plats de viandes rôties

Poularde de Bresse farcie au truffes et au foie gras

Gigot de Pré—salé aux petits légumes

Grenadins de perdreaux aux truffes flambés au Cognac

Cinq entremets

Flan d'artichauts à la Simone

Omelettes de petites asperges

Coulis d'écrevisses sur canapés

Timbales de champignons sautés en brioche

Foie gras frais aux figues

Fromages

De Brie—de Camembert—De Livarot

Parmesan—De chèvre de Provence

Desserts

Omelette glacée à la vanille

Oeuf à la neige et à la crème

Crème de chocolat aux pistaches

Tarte aux poires en meringues

Vins

Outre le Champagne servi tout le long du repas

Seront proposés

Clos Vougeot et Chambertin

Bordeaux—Tokay—Malaga—Vins blancs du Rhin

Muscat de Lunel et de Rivesaltes

Liqueurs de mandarine et de Verveine du Velay

FOOD & THE LAW

1838: USA

The first state temperance law in U.S. history was passed in Tennessee. It became a misdemeanor to sell alcoholic beverages, and offenders could be fined “at the discretion of the court,” the money so raised to be used to fund public education. In 1919, the state’s General Assembly voted almost unanimously for the 18th Amendment, which put national prohibition in force.

FOOD & WAR

1915: England, World War I

The London *Morning Post* editorial discussed the controversy surrounding the U.S. cargo vessel *SS Wilhemina*, which was engaged in delivering supplies of grain and other foodstuffs ostensibly for the civilian population of Germany. The mission was reputedly the work of a private American citizen, but the British government officially notified the U.S. government that the foodstuffs would be considered contraband of war.

At present Germany food prices are but little, if at all, higher than British.

At present German food prices are but little, if at all, higher than British food prices, but the Allies hope that if the blockade continues, in time it will become extremely irksome for the German people to continue at war, owing to the increasing scarcity of food, and that they will desire their government to discontinue the war. If Americans will fairly consider it, this is the most merciful way of ending such a conflict, which otherwise may continue to rage until the manhood of Europe is destroyed.

When weather conditions forced the *Wilhemina* to put into the British port of Falmouth on February 13, the cargo was seized (see **February 18**).

1919: France, World War I

Future president Harry S. Truman was on active military duty in France, and while he was away he wrote regularly to his sweetheart and future wife, Bess Wallace:

We finally moved and are now living in a dirty little village about four kilometers north of Bar-le-Duc. . . . Out in the room it's about freezing all the time. The old lady we stay with is very good to us, cooking pommes de terre frites, or French fried potatoes, and stewed Belgian hare. She's very careful that we don't burn our candles two at a time. They are our own but are so expensive in France that she doesn't like to see them wasted. All French women are thrifty.

THE POTATO

1588: Vienna

The exact date of the introduction of the potato to Europe is in doubt, but it is recorded that on this day that two tubers and some seeds of the potato plant reached Carolus Clusius in Vienna as a gift from Philip de Sivry, prefect of Mons in Henegouwen (Belgium). De Sivry had obtained them about a year previously from a contact at the Papal legation, who had obtained them from Italy under the name *taratoufli*. Clusius wrote the first detailed description of the potato in *Rariorum Plantarum Historia*, published in 1601, under the name *Arachidna*.

CHOCOLATE

1774: Rome

The French traveller Pierre-Jaques Bergeret de Grancourt was in Rome and commented on the way in which chocolate was prepared there: “One is served a great deal of chocolate, very foamy, very well made and without vanilla, simply cacao with cinnamon. The Italians think themselves ‘burned’ if they use vanilla. I didn’t think I could get used to it, but I find it very good.”

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt’s journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

I removed my camp to the reedy water-hole of yesterday. . . . Here I planted the last peach-stones, with which Mr Newman, the present superintendent of the Botanic Garden in Hobart Town, had kindly provided me. . . . We enjoyed a dish of cockatoos for supper: the place abounds with them.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1660: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

Home from my office to my Lord’s lodgings, where my wife had got ready a very fine dinner viz: a dish of marrow-bones. A leg of mutton. A loin of veal. A dish of fowl, three pullets and two dozen of larks, all in a dish. A great tart. A neat’s tongue. A dish of anchoves. A dish of prawns, and cheese. My company was my father, my uncle Fenner, his two sons, Mr. Pierce and all their wives, and my brother Tom. We were as merry as I could frame myself to be in that company.

JANUARY 27

THE DIET SQUAD

1917: USA

The Diet Squad experiment finished on this day (*see January 10*), and the volunteers had their final weighing and assessment. The final day's meals were as follows:

Breakfast.

Oatmeal and milk

Rolls and butter

Coffee, with milk

Cost, 7 cents; 870 calories

Luncheon.

Fried mush and syrup

White bread and butter

Steamed apricots

Tea, with milk

Cost, 7 cents; 1,100 calories

Dinner.

Baked beans, with salt pork

Whole wheat bread and butter

Molasses cakes

Tea, with milk

Cost, 11 cents; 1,150 calories

FOOD & WAR

1951: Britain, Post–World War II

Maurice Webb, the minister for food, announced that the meat ration was going to be reduced further as of February 4, to a point lower than it had ever been during the war.

Meat was rationed by cost, not points. Between August and early December the allowance for carcass meat was one shilling and sixpence per week; by the time of this announcement, it was one shilling's worth (ten pence worth of carcass meat and two pence worth of corned beef), and when the order came into effect, carcass meat would be rationed to eight pence per week.

The possibility (or probability) of meat rationing had been discussed for months. Negotiations with Argentina—the major source of frozen and corned meat—had broken down late in 1950, and Argentina had cut off the supply. The butchers' organization had expressed grave concern that stocks of frozen imported meat in the country were sufficient to last only two weeks.

Alternative sources of meat, such as Africa, were considered, and application had been made to Sweden for a veterinary certificate to clear a sample consignment of reindeer meat which was being detained by customs officials. It was hoped that reindeer meat, if approved by a Ministry of Health medical officer, would be a supplement to the meat ration.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1842: Britain

The earliest British patent for food preservation using low temperature was granted to Henry Benjamin and Henry Grafton for freezing of fish in an ice–salt mixture.

The patentees commence their specification by describing the method pursued by them for preserving fish, which is as follows:

The fish is placed in a copper or other metallic vessel, which is filled with cold water, and deposited in a wooden trough, containing a mixture of one part salt, and six parts of pulverized ice. When the fish has become frozen, it may be preserved for a considerable time, by continuing the application of the freezing mixture, and thus keeping it in a frozen state.

ANNIVERSARY

1860: England

This was the birthday of Sir George Sitwell, Fourth Baronet of Renishaw. He was an eccentric well known for his strange inventions, one of which was the “Sitwell egg.” His invention was in fact egg-free and was intended to be a convenient portable meal. The “yolk” was made from smoked meat, the “white” from rice, and the shell from synthetic lime. It is said that one morning Sir George—dressed in frock coat and silk hat—presented himself to Sir Gordon Selfridge, the founder of the famous retail chain, and announced “I am Sir George Sitwell, and I have brought my egg with me.” It appears that Selfridge was not impressed, however, for the product did not end up on the shelves of his stores.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1578: Cape Verde

From the *Account of Francis Drake’s Famous Voyage Round the World*, by Francis Pretty, one of Drake’s gentlemen at arms. The journey began in November 1577.

The master or pilot of that carvel did advertise our General that upon one of those islands (*Cape Verde*), called Mayo, there was a great store of dried cabritos [young goats] which a few inhabitants there dwelling did yearly make ready for such of the king’s ships as did there touch, being bound for his country of Brazil or elsewhere. We fell with this island the 27. of January, but the inhabitants would in no case traffic with us, being thereof

forbidden by the king's edict.

1867: Africa

From David Livingstone's journal of his expedition to find the source of the Nile:

We get some elephants' meat from the people, but high is no name for its condition. It is very bitter, but we used it as a relish to the maëre porridge: none of the animal is wasted; skin and all is cut up and sold, not one of us would touch it with the hand if we had aught else, for the gravy in which we dip our porridge is like an aqueous solution of aloes, but it prevents the heartburn, which maëre causes when taken alone. I take mushrooms boiled instead; but the meat is never refused when we can purchase it, as it seems to ease the feeling of fatigue which jungle-fruit and fare engenders. The appetite in this country is always very keen, and makes hunger worse to bear: the want of salt, probably, makes the gnawing sensation worse.

Maëre or *maere* is a species of millet commonly called finger millet. It is a staple food in many parts of Africa.

1912: Antarctica

From the Antarctic journals of Robert Falcon Scott. The party is on the return journey from the South Pole.

We are slowly getting more hungry, and it would be an advantage to have a little more food, especially for lunch. If we get to the next depot in a few marches (it is now less than 60 miles and we have a full week's food) we ought to be able to open out a little, but we can't look for a real feed till we get to the pony food depot. A long way to go, and, by Jove, this is tremendous labour.

JANUARY 28

CHARLEMAGNE'S DAY

Germany

Charlemagne, or Charles the Great (c. 742–January 28, 814), was the first ruler of the Holy Roman Empire. Although he was never able to read and write, he had a great interest in culture and education and founded the University of Paris. Charlemagne’s Day is celebrated by college students in France, who hold champagne breakfasts that include the reciting of poems and speeches.

DINING WITH PETER THE GREAT

1698: England

Peter I (Peter the Great, 1672–1725) of Russia and an entourage of twenty persons had breakfast and dinner at the King’s Arms Hotel in High Street, Godalming, on this day.

For breakfast they had the following:

Half a sheep

Quarter of a lamb

Ten pullets

Twelve chickens

3 quarts of brandy

6 quarts of mulled wine

seven dozen eggs

salad “in proportion”

At dinner the same day they had the following:

One sheep of 56 lbs

Three quarters of a lamb

A shoulder and loin of veal broiled

A shoulder and loin of veal broiled

Eight pullets

Eight rabbits

2½ dozen bottles of sack

1 dozen bottles of claret

FOOD & WAR

1942: Canada, World War II

New sugar rationing regulations came into effect. No sugar bowls were to be allowed on restaurant tables throughout the country, but sugar could be served “in reasonable quantities” (generally taken to mean two lumps) at the request of a customer.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1845: Britain

William Truman Hall was granted a patent for the preservation by drying of “animal and vegetable substances.” The method was described as follows:

[The substance is] . . . hung up, or thinly placed on shelves in a drying chamber, through which air is propelled by means “of a fan, a piston, or a cylinder.” The air, before entering the chamber, is proposed to be passed through a vessel containing fragments of chloride of calcium; the object of this being to deprive the air of moisture. To keep animal and vegetable substances “dry” only, the patentee proposes to place them in vessels “generally made of tin,” containing chloride of calcium. When the substances to be kept dry are very moist and thin, “it is advantageous to make a partial vacuum in the cases or vessels,” and to increase considerably the quantity of chloride of calcium.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1578: Cape Verde

From the *Account of Francis Drake's Famous Voyage Round the World*, by Francis Pretty, one of Drake's gentlemen at arms. On this day, Pretty mentions the coconut, which was unknown in Europe at the time.

Yet the next day (28th) our General sent to view the island (*Mayo, Cape Verde*), and the likelihoods that might be there of provision of victuals. . . . Amongst other things we found here a kind of fruit called cocos, which because it is the fruit groweth in clusters, hard at the top of the stem of the tree, as big every several fruit as a man's head; but having taken off the uttermost bark, which you shall find to be very full of strings or sinews, as I may term them, you shall come to a hard shell, which may hold in quantity of liquor a pint commonly, or some a quart, and some less. Within that shell, of the thickness of half-an-inch good, you shall have a kind of hard substance and very white, no less good and sweet than almonds; within that again, a certain clear liquor, which being drunk, you shall not only find it very delicate and sweet, but most comfortable and cordial.

WELSH RAREBIT?

1845: New York

Recipes for Welsh rarebit and Welsh rabbit have appeared in cookery books since at least the mid-eighteenth century, but few are dated. The following one is interesting:

Recipe for Welsh Rarebit, from Maj. Sam Stevens, Shades Hotel, Thames-street, New York City—the highest authority and the headquarters in all the United States for Ale and Welsh Rarebit.

Presented by Maj. Stevens, with his most respectful compliments, to Mr. Skinner, Assistant Post-Master General, in conformity with his promise. May good digestion wait on appetite.

New York, January 28, 1845

Select the finest new cheese you can procure; chop it very fine; put at least a quarter of a pound into an iron or tin sauce-pan; add a little beer or water;

stir it over the fire until perfectly dissolved; have your slice of toast on a warm plate ready to receive it; pour it over the toast, and serve it up immediately. Use for dressing, mustard, pepper, and salt, as you like it. The above furnishes a Welsh Rarebit for a single person.

Rabbit or rarebit—which is the correct name? The Shades Hotel may well have been the best place in the United States for the famous toasted cheese dish, but either the hotel or Major Stevens got it wrong. The *Oxford English Dictionary* traces *Welsh rabbit* to 1725, sixty years before *rarebit*, and no less an authority than the eminent lexicographer H. W. Fowler stated in no uncertain terms “Welsh Rabbit is amusing and right. Welsh Rarebit is stupid and wrong.”

Why did cheese become “rabbit” and how did “rabbit” become “rarebit”? It is likely that the answer to the first question is that it is either an ethnic slur (the Welsh are too poor to buy or too stupid to catch real rabbit) or an ironic joke by the Welsh themselves to indicate their good humour in times of adversity.

The answer to the second question is that it is likely to represent a gross misunderstanding of the dish, which led to an amusing mispronunciation. Imagine the word *rabbit* spoken in a genteel English accent. It sounds a bit like “rarebit,” doesn’t it?

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1780: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde:

Mr Custance . . . asked me to dine with the Company at Ringland at 2 o’clock. . . . We had for dinner a Calf’s Head, boiled Fowl and tongue, a Saddle of Mutton rosted on the Side Table, and a fine Swan rosted with Currant Jelly Sauce for the first course. The Second Course a couple of Wild Fowl called Dun Fowls, Larks, Blamange, Tarts etc etc and a good Desert of Fruit after amongst which was a Damson Cheese. I never eat a bit of Swan before, and think it good eating with sweet sauce. The Swan was killed 3 weeks before it was eat and not yet the lest bad taste in it.

JANUARY 29

AN ELIZABETHAN DINNER

1573: England

Detailed records exist of the expenditure incurred during the “progresses” of

Queen Elizabeth I around the country during her reign, and they include lists of provisions bought for various meals. On this day in 1573, several officers of the Exchequer sat down to dinner, and the accounts give a good indication of the fare.

Imprimis, for breade, ale, and beare [beer]	6s 8d
Item, for a linge [ling]	2s 6d
Item, for hearings [herrings]	0s 8d
Item, for haddocks	2s 4d
Item, for whittings	1s 0d
Item, for rochetts [roach, or gurnard]	1s 0d
Item, for smelts	0s 8d
Item, for a pigine [pigeon] pye	1s 0d
Item, for eggs	1s 0d

Item, for butter	2s 6d
Item, for sauce	0s 4d
Item, for oranges	0s 2d
Item, for spices	2s 6d
Item, for frute	0s 8d
Item, for a quarte of sack [fortified wine]	0s 6d
Item, for swete-water	0s 4d
Item, for fyre in parler and kitchin	3s 0d
Item, for cooke's wages	2s 0d
Item, for occupyenge of plate, naperie, and other necessaries	5s 0d
Item, for boote hier	0s 8d

DINING WITH KING UMBERTO

1883: Rome, Italy

Umberto I of Savoy sat down to the following luncheon menu on this day at the Palazzo del Quirinale. The food is not “Italian” as one might expect, but, with the exception of the “sandwiches,” was in the classical French style typical of the

the exception of the sandwiches, was in the classical French style typical of the dining patterns of European monarchs of the time. The menu graphics were of Egyptian motifs.

MENU

Consommé

Croustades à la Parisienne

Sanwicks de lange et volaille

Petits pains Milanaise

Saumons de la Loire—Sauce Ravigote

Suprêmes de volaille à la Maréchale

Pâtés de Foie-gras de Strasbourg

Jambon d' York à la gelée

Chapons de Styrie rôtis

Salade Russe à la Bagration

Timbales de poires à la D'Arenberg

Mousselines à l'ananas

VINS

RHIN—Hochheimer

BORDEAUX—Château Palmer

CHAMPAGNE—Grand Crémant Impérial

A LIQUID DIET

1900: USA

An article which appeared in the *Washington Post* on this day about a man living exclusively on milk and whisky triggered the following response:

The Remarkable Case of Mr. Pierson at Colonial Beach

My attention has been called to an article in *The Post* of January 29 from Durggist R.H.Rich, Colonial Beach, Va., which states that Mr. J. A. Pierson, of that place, has taken no solid food for one and one-half years, subsisting solely on milk and whisky. Having been Mr. Pierson's family physician since 1891, I can vouch for the facts stated by Mr. Rich, and, furthermore, that from 1893–1898, his sytem gradually accommodated itself to a liquid diet, and for the last two years an absolute liquid diet has been taken.

. . . He suffered with a most aggravated case of indigestion, the stomach, liver, bowels, and, in fact, the whole digestive tract being involved. From 1893 on, article after article of solid food was gradually eliminated from his bill of fare, until two years ago he took only soups, milk, and whisky. The soups not agreeing with him, six months later were discontinued. . . . The quantity of milk consumed every twenty-four hours ranges from three pints to half a gallon. The milk is always mixed with whisky—three ounces milk to one ounce of whisky. This portion is taken at short intervals during the day from the time he arises in the morning until his bed time about 9 or 10 o'clock. Mr. Pierson did not adopt this mode of living to demonstrate any pet theory, nor to gain notoriety, but solely to benefit his health. While his health is far from being good, his condition at this time is much better than it was when he was taking solid food. His weight is 143 pounds, which he tells me has been his average for the last ten or fifteen years. He is sixty years of age. Mr. Pierson is the proprietor of the Washington House, Colonial Beach, Va. and can be seen any day at his place of business.

F.F. Ninde, M.D.

THE DINNER TABLE

1803: Denmark

The original Flora Danica dinner service was used for the first time at a banquet to celebrate the birthday of the Danish king. The dinner service is perhaps the

most acclaimed and prestigious in the world. It was originally commissioned by Crown Prince Frederick in 1790, and tradition says that it was intended as an impressive gift for Tsarina Catherine II of Russia, who loved and collected porcelain. The designs were based on the lithographs of the massive botanical work *Flora Danica*, begun in 1761. The work was carried out by Johann Bayer, who spent twelve years forming and painting the 1,802 pieces that were finished. Catherine died in 1796, before the work was completed, and the dinner service remained in the Danish royal household. Just over 1,500 pieces of the original service remain today, and they are still used at royal banquets.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1644: Batavia (Indonesia)

The Dutch seaman Abel Janz Tasman (1603–1659), after whom Tasmania is named, was in Batavia (Indonesia) for the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (United East India Company). He was preparing to set sail in search of the “great unknown south land” glimpsed by previous mariners. His orders were signed on this day, and they include a few details of the provisions and the day-to-day victualling of the men aboard the three ships.

The yachts are manned with 111 persons, and amongst them one officer and 16 soldiers. Namely:

In the *Limmen*: 45 sailors, 11 soldiers; in all 56 persons.

In the *Zeemeuw*: 35 sailors, 6 soldiers; in all 41 persons.

In the *Brak*: 14 sailors, 0 soldiers; in all 14 persons.

94 sailors, 17 soldiers: total 111 persons.

All well provided with all necessary ammunition, tools, and utensils, and for eight months plentifully victualled. Manage everything well and

orderly, take notice you see the ordinary portion of two meat and two pork days, and a quarter of vinegar, a half quarter of sweet oil per week, and a half quarter of arrack per day regularly distributed. Each yacht carries a leaguer and 120 quarts of strong arrack (the Brak is provided from the Zeemeuw) which must be carefully distributed in the cold climate for the health of the people. Notwithstanding you are plentifully stocked with waterbutts manage particularly fresh water and fuel to prevent wanting it; as you would then be obliged to search after it, to the retarding of your voyage, or return without success, to your shame and the great detriment of the Company, which has been at great expense in equipping these yachts; and for these reasons, by industry and prudence, ought to be prevented from suffering.

Out of the castle, Batavia, this 29th day of January, 1644, signed, Antonio Van Diemen, Cornelis Van De Lyn, Joan Maatsuiker, Justus Schouten, And Salomon Sweers.

1913: Antarctica

Douglas Mawson (1882–1958) was by this day the sole survivor of his Antarctic survey expedition. He was near starvation and suffering from the effects of vitamin A poisoning—the result of eating the livers of the sled dogs for food. On this day he found the cache of food left by the rescue party only a few hours before.

I started on the morning of January 29 in considerable drift and a fairly strong wind. After going five miles I had miraculous good fortune.

I was travelling along on an even down grade and was wondering how long the two pounds of food which remained would last, when something dark loomed through the drift a short distance away to the right. All sorts of possibilities fled through my mind as I headed the sledge for it. The unexpected happened—it was a cairn of snow erected by McLean, Hodgeman and Hurley, who had been out searching for us. On the top of the mound was a bag of food, left on the chance that it might be picked up, while in a tin was a note stating the bearing and distance of the mound from Aladdin's Cave (E. 30 degrees S., distance twenty-three miles), that the Ship had arrived at the Hut and was waiting, that Amundsen had reached the Pole, and that Scott was remaining another year in Antarctica.

It was rather a singular fact that the search party only left this mound at eight o'clock on the morning of that very day (January 29). It was about 2 P.M. when I found it. Thus, during the night of the 28th, our camps had been only about five miles apart.

With plenty of food, I speedily felt stimulated and revived, and anticipated reaching the Hut in a day or two, for there was then not more than twenty-three miles to cover. Alas, however, there was to be another delay.

A week and a half later, he walked back into main base, to the surprise and delight of all who had been searching for him and feared him dead.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1851: USA

Herman Melville (author of *Moby Dick*) wrote to his friend Nathaniel Hawthorne (author of *The Scarlet Letter*), urging him to come to stay:

Fear not that you will cause the slightest trouble to us. Your bed is already made, & the wood marked for your fire. But a moment ago, I looked into the eyes of two fowls, whose tail feathers have been notched, as destined victims for the table. I keep the word "Welcome" all the time in my mouth, so as to be ready on the instant when you cross the threshold . . . Mark— There is some excellent Montado Sherry awaiting you & some most potent port. We will have mulled wine with wisdom, & buttered toast with story-telling & crack jokes & bottles from morning till night.

JANUARY 30

CALVES' HEAD FEAST

The Calves' Head Club was established in England shortly after the execution by beheading of King Charles I on January 30, 1649, by anti-Royalist individuals—some say the poet John Milton may have been the founder. There was much secrecy around the memberships and meetings, but the main principle was to denigrate the memory of the king, and the main event was a dinner on the anniversary of his death. The symbolic explanations and actual dishes served

vary between reports, but it was believed that the fare at the dinners consisted of a cod's head to represent the person of Charles Stuart, a pike with little ones in its mouth as an emblem of tyranny, a boar's head with an apple in its mouth to represent the king preying on his subjects, and calves' heads dressed in sundry ways to represent those who had suffered under him. An axe was placed on the table as a centerpiece, and the parting toast was, "To those worthy patriots who killed the tyrant."

The Calves' Head Club continued for almost a century, long past any personal memory of the events, no doubt because it was a good excuse for drinking and mayhem. After the riotous events of 1735 (described below) the club was abandoned.

After the restoration of Charles II, the day was declared a day of fasting to atone for the King's "murder," and Samuel Pepys makes reference to this in his diary entry of 1663 (see below).

1710: The Calves' Head Feast

The *Gentleman's Magazine* of 1820 included a "curious and original document" for which they gave a "correct transcript":

A True Bill of Fare for the Calves' Head Feast, 1710

	£	s	d
For Bread, Beer, and Ale	3	10	0
For Fifty Calves Heads	5	05	0
For Bacon	1	10	0
For 6 Chickens and 2 Capons	1	00	0

For three joints of Veall	0	18	0
For Butter and Flower [Flour]	1	15	0
For Oranges, Lemmons, Vinegar, and Spices	1	00	0
For Anchovies, Capers, and Samphire	0	05	0
For Oysters and Sausages	1	15	0
For Sorril, Sage, Parsley, Sweet Herbs and Onions	0	05	0
For the use of Pewter and Linnen	1	00	0
For Firing in the Kitchen	0	15	0
For Firing in the Parlour	0	3	0
For Boat Hire and Porterage	0	05	0
For Cook's Wages	0	15	0
For Garnishing and Strewing	1	05	0

That a sett of men were wicked enough to meet and feast according to this Bill of Fare in the year of our Lord 1710. And that this was truly the Bill of their estates, besides drink, was attested to me by one of and reputation

men eatables, besides drink, was attested to me by one of and reputation, and in a considerable publick post, who had this bill at first hand.

1735: The Calves' Head Feast

The Gentleman's Magazine under the date of January 30 gave the following report:

Some young noblemen and gentlemen met at a tavern in Suffolk Street [Charing Cross], called themselves the Calves'-Head Club, dressed up a calf's head in a napkin, and after some huzzas threw it into a bonfire, and dipped napkins in their red wine and waved them out at window. The mob had strong beer given them, and for a time hallooed as well as the best, but taking disgust at some healths proposed, grew so outrageous that they broke all the windows, and forced themselves into the house; but the guards being sent for, prevented further mischief.

LAST MEAL

1889: Mayerling, Austria

The crown prince of Austria, Rudolph Habsburg, and his beautiful seventeen-year-old

mistress, Baroness Mary Vetsera, died on this day in 1889 in what may have been a double suicide, a murder-suicide (with either Rudolph or Mary being the murderer), or a politically motivated assassination. The cover-up began immediately, which is hardly surprising, and rumor and controversy were rampant for years. The truth about their deaths will almost certainly never be known, but there seems to be consensus about the lovers' last meal together. The valet who attended them that night served them a meal of pheasant with fresh mushrooms, leeks, and baked potatoes, with two bottles of Tokay on the side.

FOOD & THE LAW

1410: England

Even as far back as the thirteenth century, legislation was put in place to protect the fish of the realm. An order issued from Westminster by Henry IV confirmed

the King of the realm. An order issued from Westminister by Henry IV. confirmed an earlier statute of his cousin, the previous king, Richard II:

Commission to John Conyers, William Fencotes, William Vyncent, Christopher de Boynton, John Doueney and Robert Mauleverere to enquire into the capture of salmon and fry in the rivers Humber, Ouse, Done, Eyre, Derwent, Querf, Nidd, Yore, Swale and Tesse, co. York, contrary to the statute of Westminister the second and the statute of 13 Richard II, and to punish the offenders according to the statutes.

The statute of the thirteenth year of Richard II's reign (1390) forbade taking or destroying

the Spawn, Fry, or Young Breed, of any kind of Fish. For a first offence, the destruction of the Nets and Engines, for a second offence, imprisonment for three months, and for the third offence, imprisonment for a year, and as the Trespass is repeated, so is the Punishment to be.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1663: London, England

Samuel Pepys, a staunch Royalist, noted the annual national fast ordained to commemorate the execution of King Charles I in 1649: "A solemne Fast for the King's murther. And we were forced to keep it more than we would have done, having forgot to take any victuals into the house. . . . So home to eat something, such as we have, bread and butter and milk; and so to bed."

1667: London, England

Samuel Pepys again notes the fast day: "Fast day for the King's death. . . . in the evening my wife and I and Mercer and Barker to little Michells, walked, with some neats' tongues and cake and wine."

VIENNA BREAD

1869: USA

The *Scientific American* of this day gave the following recipe:

Vienna White Bread

Prof. Horsford gives the following recipe for making the celebrated Vienna white bread: In the first place, great care is taken in the preparation of the flour. Scrupulous neatness and cleanliness are observed in all the processes of preparing the yeast and dough. The dough is placed in an oven somewhat of the type of the aérotherme, that is surrounded by currents of heated air, maintaining a uniform temperature of about 380g. By an arrangement of steam pipes, jets of steam are introduced into the oven to maintain an atmosphere saturated with moisture, and so retard the evaporation of water from the loaf during all the early part of the baking. When the loaf has attained its fullest distension and is penetrated by myriads of minute pores, the steam is shut off, and a side door, communicating with a separate fire from that which heats the oven, is opened. From this the heat of an intense blaze is flashed into the oven to be reflected from the low, glazed, tile roof, and give that requisite delicate red tint to the surface, which at the same time charges a thin crust with an aroma which is the product of roasting an essential oil most grateful to the palate. This part of the operation is brief, and is watched through a glass door. When complete the loaves are taken from the tins and immediately varnished with warm milk or water, with which a little good melted butter has been incorporated. The water of the milk quickly evaporates, and leaves a fine glazed surface. We can testify from considerable personal experience that the Vienna bread and beer are the best to be found anywhere.

JANUARY 31

THE WINE AND FOOD SOCIETY

1934: London, England

The Wine and Food Society held its first dinner at the Savoy Hotel on this night. The evening was presided over by the Dowager Lady Swaythling. The chairman noted in proposing a toast that membership had reached 494, and people were joining from all ranks of life and from all professions. The *Times* reported that the chairman also said the following:

They would like a large percentage of women members. They wished to see country branches of the society established. . . . Their society was not just a dining and wining club. They wished to improve the standard of cooking throughout the country, so that it could compare favourably with that to be found abroad. A journal of the society would shortly be published which, they hoped, would be a great help to travellers in England.

The menu of the dinner was also described in the newspaper:

The menu at the dinner consisted of Savoy dishes and Rhone wines. “La Soupe Montagnarde” was followed by braised salmon and “Poularde la Bresse” with mushrooms and pumpkins. Epicures gave the highest marks to “La Mouse de Lièvre à la gelée de Sysell” (cream of hare with jelly). The wines were “La Rousette de Seysell (1931 vintage), and “Le Chateauneuf du Pape” (1927 vintage), followed by “Le Royale Chautagne.”

FOOD & THE LAW

1526: Venice

Rulers and governments have for centuries almost universally unsuccessfully tried to control consumption among their subjects by way of sumptuary laws. Sometimes the motivation was the religious beliefs of a particularly devout and abstemious leader, but more often it was out of a desire to control a class who were perhaps getting a little too comfortable with their wealth and hence power.

In Renaissance Italy there was a vast amount of wealth and therefore some anxiety on the part of the rule makers. Over eighty sumptuary laws were promulgated in Italy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and most of these were in Venice. On this day in 1526 a law specifically applied to the expenditure and food at weddings was set in place.

It is stipulated that between the time that the nuptial contract is concluded and the wedding ceremony takes place, the ring-sponsors may not give the groom more than six small suppers, of no more than twenty guests apiece, and two large meals, one of which may not exceed five hundred guests and the other eighty, including men and women and close relatives, with the exception of dinners given by the Companies. The groom may give two meals, one with fifty guests and one with eighty, including men and women

and close relatives. At these meals it is prohibited to serve partridge, pheasant, peacock, francolins, baby doves, and no more than three non-gilded dishes may be served. The serving may only be done by the steward of the sideboard and carpets may not be placed on the tables.

Also prohibited are large confections of pine-nut cakes, pistachios, round filled pastries, sweets of sugar and rose-water, confections, and sweet gums, formless confections, moulded meringues, sugared fruit, and every other type of large confection that one may make or imagine. The penalty for the lawbreakers will be fifty ducats and for the pastry cook it will be twenty-five ducats . . . The stewards and cooks that serve such meals are obligated under penalty of a ten-ducat fine per person and a prison term of four months to come to our office and record when and to whom and where such meals will be held so that employees of this office may be sent to determine if the law has been broken. And the stewards are obligated to take them through the rooms so that they may do their job, and if they are impeded by members of the household or others and not allowed to do their job, the stewards are obligated to leave and no longer serve their employers who must nonetheless give [them their] wages. Similarly, if more than the allowed number of guests attends a dinner or prohibited dishes are served, the servants must come to our office after the dinner is served to report what has taken place, on pain of the above penalties. And truly, those who would act so dishonestly as to throw bread or oranges at our employees, or push them or kick them out, will fall subject to a penalty of fifty ducats.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1828: Britain

An early British patent (No. 5614) for a food preservation method was granted to Donald Currie. His method of preserving grain, and other vegetable and animal substances, was by enclosing them in air-tight vessels, vaults, and other “proper receptacles.” From these the atmospheric air was to be extracted as much as possible, to be replaced by carbonic acid gas, “obtained by any of many well-known methods, as by combustion of charcoal and fermentation.”

1989: USA

Calgene Inc. received Patent No. 4,801,540 for the “PG gene and its use in

Calgene Inc. received Patent No. 4,001,070 for the *ES* gene and its use in Plants.” The effect of the polygalacturonase DNA sequence was to slow down the enzyme responsible for the softening of the cell walls of the fruit, thereby extending shelf life.

FAST FOOD

1990: Soviet Union

McDonald’s opened in Moscow, on Pushkin Square. Negotiations with the Communist government to open this “pearl of capitalism” had begun fourteen years earlier, and the project cost \$50 million. On opening day, thousands queued to look and to buy, although the purchase of a basic Big Mac with fries and a drink cost half a day’s wages for the average Russian.

There are now over 300 McDonald’s restaurants in Russia providing jobs for about 25,000 people plus another 100,000 employed in the supply chain.

FOOD & WAR

1945: Germany, World War II

An RAF POW wrote of the evacuation of Stalag Luft VII in his diary:

Ration issue—1/5th loaf. 1 packet biscuits 1/10 lb margarine. Two and a half cups of soup, 2/3rd cup dry oats and 2 spoonful of coffee grounds. . . . Polish people with whom we came in contact showed much compassion. 2 cups of porridge and onions—a real banquet!

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1911: Canada, The Lost Patrol

Inspector Francis J. Fitzgerald and his comrades became lost on a routine journey between Fort McPherson and Dawson City, Yukon. They had been reduced to killing and eating their sled dogs. By January 31 the men were suffering from vitamin A poisoning as a result of eating the dog’s livers. Fitzgerald wrote: “Skin peeling off our faces and bodies and parts of our bodies and lips all swollen and split. I suppose this is caused by feeding on dog meat.”

and lips all swollen and split. I suppose this is caused by feeding on dog meat, everybody feeling the cold very much for want of proper food.”

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1747: Florence

Horace Mann was the British envoy in Florence for nearly fifty years. He kept up a prolific correspondence with Horace Walpole during most of this time and on this day wrote to him of his embarrassment at the ignorant behavior of his countrymen and their attempts at continental dining.

Lord Hobart and I were ready to burst with laughter t’other day at a noble table, when ten people were set down to a first course of soup and two hors d’oeuvres, literally consisting of a mustard pot in a small dish, and opposite to it a plate of the vile white radishes. The mustard was to serve for the bouilli which was to relieve the soup.

February

FEBRUARY 1

IMBOLC AND SAINT BRIGID'S DAY

Imbolc was an ancient Celtic festival held at the spring equinox. As with many ancient festivals, the traditions of the day became a blend of pagan and Christian concepts. The Gaelic word *imbolc* references the fertility of sheep, and hence the anticipation of increased milk production with the onset of spring and fresh pastures. In order to ensure a good season, rituals were held to propitiate the pagan “white goddess” and “light bringer.” This pagan goddess later became Christianized as Saint Brigid (or Saint Bride). It is not surprising that Brigid became the patron saint of the dairy. She is credited with many miracles involving milk, butter, cheese, bacon, and ale, and many of the food customs of the day centered around milk and butter.

Again, as is usual with festivals of ancient origin, the celebration traditionally started at sunset on the preceding eve, as it was believed that at the beginning of everything it was dark, and this was therefore the beginning of the new day. Traditional practices varied from one locality to another, as is again usual for such festivals. In some parts of Ireland children would go from house to house, begging for items to use to decorate the images of Brigid. It was believed that the saint travelled the country on the eve of her festival, and to propitiate her, families would place cake or a piece of bread and butter on the windowsill.

Milk and milk products were scarce at this time of the year but were often set aside and kept for the day, and families who did have some to spare gave it to the poor of the community.

In some parts of Ireland, bread (made from oats) was made in the shape of a cross especially for the occasion, and a sheaf of corn was placed beside it for the white cow which accompanied Brigid. Many communities made special breads (or at least specially named breads) such as Bride bannocks and Bride rolls. A traditional Irish favorite all year round, also undoubtedly eaten on the day, is *boxty*, made from potatoes.

BOXTY

Boxty is explained in an edition of the *Dublin University Magazine* of 1854:

In the formation of potato starch the fibrous portion of the tuber, when separated and squeezed from the watery part, was mixed with coarse flour or oatmeal, and by the addition of a little kitchen stuff [i.e., fat rendered from meat] or butter formed into a cake popularly known in the west as *boxtie*, and in the south denominated “buck bread”, “Scotch”, or “stampy”. This was so much admired, that the children in country parts used to make a grater out of the side of an old tin can, by punching it with an awl in order to rasp lumpers [potatoes] for a feast of *boxtie*. If we have reserved to the last, the potato-cake, made by bruising with the bottom of a tin porringer, two cold well-boiled potatoes, and mixing therewith a pound of the finest flour, the yolk of a fresh egg, a print of butter, and a sup of new-milk, the whole being well kneaded then pounded with a rolling pin, made into a cake five eighths of an inch thick, cut into squares and diamonds, baked on a griddle, and when properly browned and mottled, each piece torn asunder like a muffin, and a bit of butter slipt in to melt in the interior, and then eaten at tea or breakfast but particularly at the former, it is because it was the most widely disseminated, and universally admired form of potato-eating known to all tea-drinkers and cup-tossers from Cape Clear to the Causeway.

MORTUARY DINNER

1783: France

Alexandre Balthazar Laurent Grimod de la Reyniere (1758–1837) was a wealthy Parisian gastronome known for his eccentricity. He held regular *diners philosophiques*, and one of the best known, and probably the most infamous, of these came to be called the “mortuary dinner.” Invitations in the form of obituary notices were sent out for a for a “collation supper,” and guests were advised that

The arrival is fixed for 9 o’clock and supper will take place at 10 o’clock. You are requested to bring neither dog nor lackey as there will be enough servants. Neither pig nor oil will be missing from the supper. You are requested to bring this invitation, without which admittance will be refused.

Guests were subjected to an elaborate ritual of credential checking and mock interrogation before being led into a room lit by tapers and hung with black curtains. A large funeral catafalque was in the center of the room, and by some accounts there was a coffin behind every chair. Unfortunately no exact menu survives, although it is said that every dish contained pork. The inspiration or motive for the theme is not known, although there are several theories. The particular decision of the pork is interesting. One of the young Grimod's escapades was to host a dinner party at the hotel owned by the family, at which a pig, dressed in clothing, presided at the head of the table. Unfortunately, the young man's father turned up unexpectedly and witnessed the spectacle, resulting in the young man being disinherited and sent to live at an abbey, where, presumably, it was intended that he learn better behavior. Alternatively, perhaps the choice of pig was to add an oddly cannibalistic tone, it being said that the human is called "long pig" by some cannibal nations because its flavor resembles that of pork.

WILD FOOD

1823: USA

Wild meats were on the menu in New York, according to a notice in the *Commercial Advertiser* on this day.

WILD MEATS.—Our markets are not only well supplied with every variety of domestic meat and fowls, but there is a great variety of wild meats and wild game. Mr. Sykes (who kept the New York Coffee-house) has a fine bear (weighing two hundred pounds), which he is soon to serve up to his friends; and we yesterday saw, at Fulton-market, two wagons, from Sullivan County, N.Y., the one filled with white hares and partridges, and the other with venison. On the top of the bucks, which were stowed closely, stood a fierce-looking panther, almost eight feet long, as if to guard the buck-tailed tribe. The panther was killed in Sullivan County, about two weeks since.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1977: USA

THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The well-known Coca-Cola bottle shape received Trademark Registration No. 1057884 on this day. It was the same bottle that had been granted U.S. Design Patent No. 63657, which expired in 1937.

FOOD & WAR

1900: South Africa, Boer War

From *Four Months Besieged: The Story of Ladysmith*, by H. H. S. Pearse. The siege of Ladysmith began on October 30, 1899. Pearse's diary entry on this day described the food situation:

It has come at last. Horseflesh is to be served out for food, instead of being buried or cremated. We do not take it in the solid form yet, or at least not consciously, but Colonel Ward has set up a factory, with Lieutenant McNalty as managing director, for the conversion of horseflesh into extract of meat under the inviting name of Chevril. This is intended for use in hospitals, where nourishment in that form is sorely needed, since Bovril and Liebig are not to be had. It is also ordered that a pint of soup made from this Chevril shall be issued daily to each man. I have tasted the soup and found it excellent, prejudice notwithstanding.

1915: Germany, World War I

An announcement was made that as of this day, all the corn and flour supplies in the country were to be taken over by the German Federal Council.

A legal correspondent to *The Times* commented:

According to the rules which have been generally accepted in recent years, foodstuffs are conditional contraband. They are liable to capture only on evidence that they are destined—to adopt the words of the Declaration of London—“for the use of the armed forces, or of a Government Department of the enemy state.” There can be no doubt that from February 1 all corn and flour consigned to Germany by neutral powers will be destined for the use of a Government Department.

1940: Britain, World War II

Professor Jack Cecil Drummond was appointed scientific adviser to the Ministry of Food. The ministry was under the leadership of Frederick Marquis, first Earl of Woolton, and was responsible for the administration of the wartime rationing system. The good working relationship between Drummond and Woolton was a significant factor in the success of the system in ensuring fairness in the distribution of food in Britain during the war and afterward.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1660: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys. Pepys described a very austere Lenten meal, quite different from his usual rich fare:

In the morning went to my office where afterwards the old man brought me my letters from the carrier. At noon I went home and dined with my wife on pease porridge and nothing else.

Dry, or old Pease Pottage

Take the choicest pease (that some call seed-way pease) commonly they be a little worm eaten (those are the best boiling pease) pick and wash them, and put them in boiling liquor in a pot or pipkin; being tender boild, take out some of them, strain them and set them by for your use, then season the rest with salt, a bundle of mints and butter, let them stew leisurely, and put to them some pepper.

—*The Accomplish't Cook* (1660), by Robert May

FEBRUARY 2

CANDLEMAS

Candlemas is the Christian church's celebration of the presentation of Christ at the temple, forty days after his birth. The date essentially coincides with the ancient Roman rite of *februation*, or purification, and also with many pagan spring ceremonies. The traditions of the day are a blend of all of these elements, and they include, of course, some specific foods.

In France, *crêpes* are eaten, and this is supposed to ensure a good wheat crop. An added superstition was that prosperity would be ensured by successfully flipping the first crêpe with the right hand while holding a gold coin in the left. In Provence, small orange-scented dry cakes shaped like little boats are eaten. These have been made in bakeries near the abbey of St. Victor in Marseilles since the late eighteenth century. They are said to represent the boat which carried the three *Saintes Marie* (Magdalene, Salome, and Jacobe) who, according to legend, were washed up on the beach near the town now called Les Saintes Maries de la Mer after their flight from the Holy Land.

In Mexico, the person who found the doll hidden in the *rosca de reves* (king cake or twelfth cake) is supposed to throw a party on this day.

GROUND HOG DAY

In Pennsylvania, folklore has it that the weather can be predicted by the behavior of the groundhog when it emerges from its winter burrow on this day. If the groundhog does not see its shadow, spring weather is imminent; if it sees its shadow, it will retreat to its burrow for there will be more weeks of wintry weather. There are parallel legends about the badger in Germany, so no doubt the Pennsylvania Dutch brought the tradition with them and substituted the local animal.

The dish of the day is *scrapple*, a Pennsylvania Dutch dish of pork scraps, cornmeal and other flour, and spices formed into a loaf which, when set, is sliced and fried.

Here is one version of scrapple from a nineteenth-century cookbook based on Quaker and Pennsylvania Dutch recipes.

Scrapple

Take eight pounds of scraps of pork, that will not do for sausage; boil it in four gallons of water; when tender, chop it fine, strain the liquor and pour it back into the pot; put in the meat; season it with sage, summer savory, salt and pepper to taste; stir in a quart of corn meal; after simmering a few minutes, thicken it with buckwheat flour very thick; it requires very little cooking after it is thickened, but must be stirred constantly.

—*Domestic Cookery, Useful Receipts, and Hints to Young Housekeepers*
(Baltimore, 1869), by Elizabeth Lea

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1795: France

Nicholas Appert (1741–1841) was awarded the prize of 12,000 francs which had been offered by Napoleon Bonaparte for an efficient method of preserving food for his massive land army on the move.

Appert's invention involved heating food in airtight jars. The problem with glass, of course, is its inherent fragility, but once the *process* was established, the move to using metal cans happened very quickly. It was another Frenchman, Pierre Durand (*see* August 25), who succeeded in using cans in place of glass, and an Englishman, Bryan Donkin, who began large-scale production of canned foods in 1811.

The method was a success long before the science was understood. Germ theory only began to be developed in the 1830s and 1840s, and it was not until Louis Pasteur's work in the 1860s that it was found that heating stopped the growth of the microorganisms that were causing food spoilage. We now call that process *pasteurization*, in his honor.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

1880: Australia

The first successful shipment of frozen meat from Australia arrived at the docks in London aboard the SS *Strathleven*.

The *Strathleven* had been fitted with air compression/expansion equipment and had left Melbourne on December 6, 1879, with meat frozen in Sydney two weeks earlier. The ship carried the carcasses of 562 sheep, 60 bullocks, and 2 lambs, a "modest total" of 40 tons, as well as 3 tons of butter. The meat arrived in excellent condition, and a luncheon composed of meat from the freezers was served aboard the vessel on February 6. On February 7 the sale of the meat took place at the Smithfield market.

The master of the *SS Strathleven* sampled some of the frozen meat en route. On January 7, in the port of Aden, he wrote to the editor of the Melbourne newspaper, the *Argus*, with a report on the voyage so far:

We arrived here this morning, and hope to leave this afternoon for Suez, on our way to London.

We have tried both the frozen beef and mutton several times on our passage since we left Melbourne on December 6. We had a beefsteak for breakfast and roast beef for dinner yesterday, from the first beef frozen at Sydney on November 18, 1879. Both the beef and mutton are excellent in quality and flavour.

We experienced no difficulty in the tropics in using the warm water for cooling the air.

On the morning of December 19, we stopped the freezing engine (to do some temporary repairs) for 9½ hours, the temperature in the freezing chamber remaining very low, only raising a few degrees. We have since then stopped the engine every day . . . 8 hours out of 24.

After entering the Mediterranean we expect to stop 12 hours out of the 24 every day.

We have no fear (barring some accident) but that we shall deliver the meat in good condition in London.

WINE HISTORY

1659: Cape of Good Hope

Jan van Riebeeck, the founder and first governor of the Dutch colony at Cape Town in South Africa, planted a vineyard there in 1655. Four years later, on February 2, 1659, he made the first wine from the fruit of that vineyard.

MILITARY PROHIBITION

1901: USA

A degree of prohibition had been imposed on the U.S. Army since 1890 when Congress banned intoxicating beverages to enlisted men at military posts located in states, territories, or counties with local prohibition laws. On February 2, 1901, prohibition in the army was tightened a little further with the passage of the so-called Canteen Act, which forbade the following: “[T]he sale of, or dealing in, beer, wine or any intoxicating liquors by any person in any post exchange or canteen or army transport or upon any premises used for military purposes by the United States.”

Army regulations retained this prohibition statement for the next fifty years. In practice, however, it was open to wide interpretation as the army definition of an intoxicating beverage was of one containing “an appreciative quantity of alcohol,” which was considered to exclude beer and some wines.

FEBRUARY 3

SAINT BLAISE’S DAY

Saint Blaise is the patron saint of the wool trade and protector against afflictions of the throat.

In Spain it is traditional to bake small loaves of bread called *tortas de San Blas* (Saint Blas’s loaves) or *panecillos del santo* (little breads of the saint), which are blessed at Mass, after which small pieces of the bread are given to children in the belief that this will prevent them from choking during their early years.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1874: USA

Samuel W. Francis of Newport, Rhode Island, was granted Patent No. 147119 for an “Improvement in Combined Knives, Forks, and Spoons.” This appears to be the earliest patent for a piece of combination cutlery. The patent specifications explain:

The object of this invention is to combine in a convenient manner, in one implement, a knife, fork, and spoon. To this end I group the several elements close together, using the bowl of the spoon as a central element, around or upon which the remaining elements are placed. I form the knife

around or upon which the remaining elements are placed. In form the knife on one edge of the spoon-bowl, while the fork-tines are placed at the front edge of said bowl. With the bowl is connected a handle of any configuration.

Many combination eating utensils have been invented over the last 150 years. The best known are the spork (see **October 27**) and the splayd.



Spoon Fork Knife Combo

FOOD & WAR

1900: South Africa, Boer War, The Siege of Ladysmith

From *Four Months Besieged: The Story of Ladysmith*, by H. H. S. Pearse:

Horseflesh was placed frankly on the bill of fare to-day as a ration for troops and civilians alike, but many of the latter refused to take it. Hunger will probably make them less squeamish, but one cannot help sympathising with the weakly, who are already suffering from want of proper

nourishment, and for whom there is no alternative. Market prices have long since gone beyond the reach of ordinary purses.

1917: Britain, World War I, Voluntary Rationing: “The Nation on Its Honour”

The first official announcement about the possibility of wartime rationing appeared in the newspapers. The *Times* report said:

The Food Controller has issued an important statement emphasizing the urgent need of economy in food. Compulsory rationing is to be avoided if possible, and for the present, Lord Devonport appeals to the public to limit its purchases of three staple foods as follows: 4 lb. of bread (or its equivalent in Flour, 3 lb. for bread-making), 2½ lb. of meat, and ¾ lb. of sugar per head per week.

Compulsory food rationing was, however, introduced on December 17, with sugar being the first item to be controlled.

1918: Britain, World War I

The Public Meals Order came into effect. The primary intention was to conserve sugar, which was in short supply. The order prohibited the consumption of any sugar in a public eating place except (1) that used for cooking, (2) that brought by the customer, and (3) that supplied to hotel residents.

1945: Yalta, World War II



The Three Leaders

(© Bettmann/Corbis/AP Images)

British prime minister Winston Churchill arrived for the postwar conference of the major Allied leaders (himself, Stalin, and Roosevelt) which was scheduled to start the next day to discuss the details of the occupation and final defeat of Nazi Germany. Apparently within a few minutes of his arrival he was sitting in a tent enjoying Russian vodka and caviar.

FOOD & BOOKS

1557: England

Thomas Tusser published *A Hundreth Good Pointes of Husbandrie*, an almanac written in rhyming couplets which describe the cycle of activities of the rural year and the duties of the individual persons in the household. The book was a great success and in 1573 was enlarged to *Five Hundreth Pointes of Good Husbandrie*. Both are a wonderful source of information on domestic and farm life in Elizabethan England.

Management of the household and the kitchen garden were the responsibility of

the *huswife*, and doing this well, according to Tusser, saved money—and kept the *husbande* happy.

Haue millions [melons] at Michelmas, parsneps [parsnips] in lent:

In June, buttred beanes, saveth fish to be spent.

With those and good pottage, inough having than:

thou winnest the heart, of thy laboring man.

Tusser urged the learning of various household skills so as to avoid being cheated by others.

But huswiues, that learne not to make their owne cheese:

with trusting of others, haue this for their feese.

Their milke slapt in corners, their creame al to sost:

their milk pannes so flotte, that their cheeses be lost.

EXTREME FOOD

1790: England

According to the *Public Advertiser* of February 3, 1790, the notorious “Cat-eater of Windsor” gave another demonstration of his “brutality—[in] an instance too ferocious and sanguinary, almost to admit of public representation.” It was reported that at a public house—perhaps the same one where he had eaten the cat—he had suddenly grabbed a bill-hook and hacked off one of his own hands. It seems his only reason was “his total disinclination for work” and a sudden idea that the parish would provide for him.

[W]e simply don’t know whether Lord Barrymore ever found a cat-eater to bail him out but a similar wager—that a live cat was to be eaten at a public house in Windsor—was certainly made in January 1790. One of the correspondents of the *Sporting Magazine* was there to witness the disgusting proceedings. A nine-pound cat had been selected as the victim,

and “the Man-monster . . . made a formidable attack on the head of his antagonist and, with repeated bites, soon deprived it of existence.” He then devoured his prey without even stripping off the skin, leaving only the bones “as memorials of . . . the degradation of human nature.”

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1911: Canada, The Lost Patrol

Inspector Francis J. Fitzgerald and his comrades became lost on a journey between Fort McPherson and Dawson City, Yukon, and by this date were starving, and reduced to eating their sled dogs.

Killed another dog tonight, and had to feed some of it to the dogs as we have no dried fish. Men and dogs very thin and weak and cannot travel far. We have travelled about 200 miles on dog meat, and have still about 100 miles to go, but I think we will make it alright, but will only have three or four dogs left.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1662: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

At noon I dined with Sir W. Batten with many friends more, it being his Wedding-day. And among other Froliques, it being their third year, they had three pyes, whereof the middlemost was made of an ovall form in an Ovall hole within the other two which made much mirth and was called the middle peace; and above all the rest, we had great striving to steal a spoonfull out of it; and I remember Mrs. Mills the ministers wife did steal one for me and did give it me; and to end all, Mrs. Shippman did fill the pie full of White wine (it holding at least a pint and a half) and did drink it off for a health to Sir Wm. and my Lady, it being the greatest draught that ever I did see a woman drink in my life. Before we had dined came Sir G. Carteret, and we went all three to the office and did business there till night. And then to Sir Wm. Batten again, and I went along with my Lady and the gentlewomen to Maj. Holmes’s and there we had a fine supper, among others excellent lobsters, which I never eat at this time of the year before

oulets, excellent lobsters, which I never eat at this time of the year before.

Pies at this time were made in a very dense thick pastry shell or “coffin” which functioned as a baking container—shaped metal baking dishes had to await the technological advances of the Industrial Revolution. If they were well sealed, did not crack, and were kept dry, the contents of such a pie would keep for a long time, so the coffin also acted as a preserving container. Numerous recipes of the time note that a pie would “keep a twelvemonth”—a horrific thought by today’s standards.

FEBRUARY 4

THE FIRST EPICURE

341 B.C. Samos

This is said to be the birthday of Epicurus, the Athenian philosopher from whose name we get the word *epicure* and its derivatives. His philosophy was not that life should be about the pursuit of pleasure for its own sake, as is commonly believed, but that a pleasurable life was a life free from physical and mental pain. Epicurus himself was quite abstemious. Living well to him meant enjoying the simple and lasting pleasures of life, such as good friends and good (but not excessive or indulgent) food, but this pleasure must not be achieved at the expense of honor, justice, and prudence: “All other virtues grow from prudence, which teaches that we cannot live pleurably without living justly and virtuously, nor live justly and virtuously without living pleurably.”

FOOD & WAR

1945: Germany, World War II

An RAF POW wrote of the evacuation of Stalag Luft VII in his diary: “Information to the effect we move tomorrow as transport awaits us at Goldberg. Rations—1/3 loaf, 1/6 lb marge [margarine], 1 spoonful sugar, 1/2 cup flour, 1/2 cup barley, 1/3 tin meat, 1/2 cup porridge oats. How long will this have to last?”

FOOD FIRSTS

1854: England

The Cadbury brothers became the first manufacturers to be admitted by royal warrant “into the place of Manufacturers of Cocoa at Birmingham to Her Majesty [Queen Victoria]. To have and enjoy all the Rights, Privileges, and Advantages to the said place.” Queen Elizabeth II granted Cadbury’s a warrant of appointment in 1955.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1879: USA

John H. Heinz, of Sharpsburg, Pennsylvania, was granted Patent No. 212000 for his “Improvement in Vegetable-Assorters.” In his patent specifications he said that “[t]he object of my invention is to assort in different sizes or grades vegetables, fruits, &c., intended for preserving, pickling, or the market, in a rapid and certain manner.”



Early Heinz Wagon with Advertising

Early train wagon with advertising

(© Bettmann/Corbis/AP Images)

PASTA

1279: Genoa, Italy

The pasta industry was already well established by this time, as is demonstrated in an inventory drawn up on this day by a Genoese notary. Ugolino Scarpa, a notary, listed in the effects of a soldier, Ponzio Bastone, *una bariscela plena de macaronis* (a basket of macaroni). This indicates that the pasta must have been in dry form and that it was considered valuable enough to be given as a bequest.

The persisting myth that Marco Polo introduced pasta to Italy is fundamentally flawed for a number of reasons, but this inventory note clearly suggests that pasta must have been well established before his return to Italy from the East in 1269.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

At the camp of the 4th of February my companions shot twenty-one pigeons (*Geophaps scripta*), and five cockatoos; a welcome addition to our scanty meals. For a considerable time previous, I had reduced our allowance of flour to three pounds; but now, considering that we were still so far to the eastward, it was, by general consent of my companions, again reduced to a pound and a-half per diem for the six, of which a damper mixed up with fat was made every day, as soon as we reached our encampment.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1660: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

4th. . . . and from thence to Gray's Inn, thinking to speak with Sotherton Ellis, but found him not, so we met with an acquaintance of his in the walks, and went and drank, where I ate some bread and butter, having ate nothing all day, while they were by chance discoursing of Marriot, the great eater, so that I was, I remember, ashamed to eat what I would have done. . . . This day my wife killed her turkeys that Mr. Sheply gave her, that came out of Zealand with my Lord, and could not get her m'd Jane by no means at any time to kill anything.

“Marriot the Great Eater” was William Marriot, a lawyer at Gray's Inn in London and reputed to be a gourmand. For reasons unknown he became the butt of a scurrilous campaign by the satirist George Fidge, who portrayed him as an obscenely indiscriminate and greedy eater. Marriot died in 1653, by which time his name had become the personification of gluttony.

A satirical book called *The English Mountebank: or a Physical Dispensatory*, published in 1653, was purported to be by Marriott himself. It contained the following recipe:

How to Make Mr Marriotts Dish, called a Frigazee

This Mr Marriot hearing of a new Dish that was much used at Oxford Cates, and in other places about the City amongst the gallants, thought in his fancie to make one that should resemble it, because the materials that were used in it were too deer for him; but being a man of rare stomack, quickly guessed at something that was eatible, though dressed in a strange way. When he had thought upon all the materials of this Dish, he began to put it in practice, having gotten all the Ingredients together, to try this rare conclusion.

And thus he made it:

He took three great Pomcitrons, and pulled out the Kernels that were within them; then he pared the outside rinde off, and then sliced them into thin slices; then he had as many Apples which he sliced also: then he took two Bullocks Livers and sliced them very thin and broad: then he laid a row of

the former slices in the bottome of his Oxe-cheek pot; he pepper'd his Liver well, and laid a laying of one, and a laying of another, till he had filled his pot, strewing many fine herbs on the top of it: Then he carryed it to the Bake-house staid till it was baked; being come home, he invited his Landlord to taste of his new Difh, who I dare swear never saw the like before but his Landlord knowing his slomack, and that a—was as good for a Sow as a pancake, praised his dish highly, saying. It is very good, but I have newly supped; therefore I desire you to excuse me to night: I shall leave none for tomorrow, qd.he, and so fell on, as if it had been a Chicken roasted: so excellent is his stomack for digestion.

FEBRUARY 5

RUNEBERG DAY

Finland

The life and work of the national poet, Johan Ludvig Runeberg, is celebrated on this day—the anniversary of his birth in 1804. It is traditional to eat *Runebergin kakku* (Runeberg's cake). These are shaped like tall cupcakes, with ground almonds in the batter and a decoration of jam and white icing.

There are various theories as to why this cake is associated with the day, but it is generally said to have been created by his wife, Frederika, and to have been a particular favorite of the man himself.

LITERARY PARTIES

1959: New York

Carson McCullers, the American author of *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter*, invited a very select few to lunch at her home in Nyack, New York, on this day. She had recently met Isak Dinesen, the Danish author of *Out of Africa* and *Babette's Feast*, then visiting America, and Dinesen had expressed a wish to meet film star Marilyn Monroe. McCullers therefore invited Dinesen, Monroe, and Monroe's husband, playwright Arthur Miller, to lunch.

The meal was served on McCullers's black marble table, and the menu consisted

of soufflé, oysters, grapes, and champagne. It is said that Miller asked Dinesen if a meal such as that was suitable for a woman of her age (she was seventy-four years old at the time and very frail) to which Dinesen apparently replied that at her age, she would eat what she pleased.

1973: New York, USA, The Fifth Estate

The writer Norman Mailer (1923–2007) threw himself a fiftieth birthday party at the Four Seasons in Manhattan. The event had been anticipated for weeks. Five thousand invitations on purple paper had been sent out, and an admission fee, or “donation,” of \$50 per couple was required. The charity to which this donation was to go was something Mailer referred to as “The Fifth Estate,” although the details of this were not clear. Five hundred and eighty guests turned up, including several of his ex-wives and mistresses. Mailer was drunk, and his rambling “major announcement” about “the establishment of the Fifth Estate, a democratic secret police to keep tabs on the F.B.I. and the C.I.A.” was unintelligible, and the whole event was “a circus,” “a noisy brawl.”

The buffet meal consisted of a plate with hazelnuts, Hungarian goulash, and quiche Lorraine, with chocolate cake and apricot mouse for dessert and chilled white wine to accompany the food.

WHISKY GALORE

1941: Isle of Eriskay, Outer Hebrides, Scotland

The SS *Politician*, a cargo ship loaded with 28,000 cases (over a quarter of a million bottles) of malt whisky, sank and broke up in a gale off Eriskay Island. Over the ensuing weeks, before customs and excise officials and police could arrive, the islanders enthusiastically (but illegally) salvaged much of the intact cargo.

The story inspired Compton Mackenzie’s novel *Whisky Galore*, which was subsequently made the subject of a movie of the same name.

FOOD & WAR

1865: American Civil War

From the diary of Captain Robert Emory Park, kept during his years as a Confederate prisoner. By this date he had been transferred to the prison at Fort Delaware, where he wrote:

The “pen,” as our quarters are called, embraces an area of near two acres. . . . The mess-room . . . is a long, dark room, having a long pine table, on which the food is placed in separate piles, either on a tin plate or on the uncovered, greasy table, at meal hours, twice a day. No knives nor forks, nor spoons are furnished. Captain Browne kindly brought my meals to me. The fare consists of a slice of baker’s bread, very often stale, with weak coffee, for breakfast, and a slice of bread and piece of salt pork or salt beef, sometimes alternating with boiled fresh beef and bean soup, for dinner. The beef is often tough and hard to masticate. It is said to be thrown, bloody and unwashed, in huge pots, filled with water of doubtful cleanliness, and boiled. Many prisoners club together and form messes, and with such money as they receive from Northern friends, or as they can make by their own ingenious work, buy such eatables as can be obtained from the sutler. The prison allowance is poor and scant indeed, and I eagerly consume all I receive. Being on crutches I am unable to run and scuffle for a place at the mess-room table, where all stand to eat, after pushing and crowding in. Many bring their rations to their bunks, and eat there. All eat as if hungry and ill-fed. Tubs, made of barrels, are placed at night in front of the doors, and used as urinals. These are emptied by details of prisoners early every morning. Each division has its daily details to make fires, sweep up, *etc.* I spent much of the day writing to friends, informing them of my “change of base” from the Old Capitol to Fort Delaware.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1850: USA

Gail Borden Jr. of Galveston, Texas, was granted Patent No. 7066 for a “Preparation of Portable Soup-Bread.” His patent application described his “meat biscuit” as follows:

The nature of my invention consists in extracting the nutritious parts of flesh or animal meat of every description and combining this concentrated extract with flour or vegetable meal, and baking the two substances in an oven, thereby forming a portable dessicated soup-bread containing a large

amount of the most important alimentary substance in a very small bulk and convenient form, well adapted to seafaring purposes, travelers, hospitals, and also for family use, which will save the trouble and expense of much cooking.

His invention was widely hailed at the time, the *Scientific American* magazine of March 23, 1850, describing it as “an invention of the first importance, both to our own country, and it may be said, to the whole human race.”

1884: USA

African American Willis Johnson, of Cincinnati, Ohio, received Patent No. 292821 for an “Egg-Beater.” The object of the invention was “to provide a machine wherewith eggs, batter, and other similar ingredients used by bakers, confectioners, &c., can be beaten or mixed in the most intimate and expeditious manner.”

Johnson’s device, then, was not purely for eggs. It was an early type of mixing machine. The device had two chambers—eggs could be beaten in one, and batter in another, or one section could be cleaned while the other was operational.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769: Aboard the *Endeavour*

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks:

“*Standing to the Westward.*” All but calm today: myself a little better than yesterday, well enough to eat part of the Albatrosses shot on the third, which were so good that every body commended and Eat heartily of them tho there was fresh pork upon the table. The way of dressing them is thus: Skin them overnight and soak their carcasses in Salt water till morn, then parboil them and throw away the water, then stew them well with very little water and when sufficiently tender serve them up with Savoury sauce.

1793: Jamaica

Captain William Bligh’s “breadfruit voyage” was successfully completed when

his ship *Providence* arrived in Royal Harbour, Jamaica. The trees had been collected in Tahiti in the previous June and July. The impetus for the project had come from planters in Jamaica who were seeking a cheap source of food for their slaves. Hurricanes and droughts, coming on the back of the trade blockades of the American Revolutionary War, had destroyed the crops and farm grounds where slave provisions were grown, and it was estimated that between 1780 and 1787, fifteen thousand slaves had died of malnutrition.

Third Lieutenant George Tobin wrote:

Our floating forest was eagerly visited by numbers of every rank and degree, and in fact it was a most gratifying sight. . . . The poor negroes for whose benefit the voyage was chiefly promoted, were loud in their praises of “de ship da hab de bush” and were constantly paddling round in their canoes.

The *Royal Gazette* described the arrival of the ships and opined:

The introduction of the breadfruit into this island will constitute a remarkable era in its annals. In less than twenty years, the chief article of sustenance for our negroes will be entirely changed:—plantains, yams, cocos, and cassava will be cultivated only as a subsidiary, and be used merely for change, whilst the breadfruit, gaining firm hold in the earth . . . will afford in the greatest abundance, for nine months of the year, the choicest and most wholesome food.

FEBRUARY 6

HORSEMEAT BANQUETS

1865: Paris, France

The first of a series of *banquets hippophagiques* (horsemeat banquets) was held at the Grand Hotel Paris in an attempt to stimulate interest in horseflesh as an article of food. Horsemeat was already being eaten in France at this time, but the practice was illegal, hence uncontrolled and often unsanitary. The ostensible and primary motivation was to provide an alternative and cheap source of protein for the poor, but there were secondary goals of regulating the trade to increase food

safety and to reduce the incidence of covert substitution for other meats. One hundred and thirty-five professional men and civic leaders—“men who, by their high social position, could exert a salutary influence on public opinion”—sat down to the meal with the goal “to try to destroy a prejudice of the stomach that is as tenacious, and as unjust as all the prejudices of cast and of nation.”

A year later the first legal horse butchery opened in Paris, with the mandated horsehead symbol above its doors. Enthusiasm for the idea spread quickly to Britain, where there was similar motivation to find cheap meat for the poor.

1868: London, England

A banquet hippophagique was held at the Langham Hotel. As with the Paris dinner in 1865, “this dinner was intended not to gratify the palates of a few, but to popularize a new article of good for the poor.” One hundred and sixty gentlemen sat down to the dinner of twenty-nine dishes. Almost all were based on horseflesh—even the sole and the lobster dishes were dressed with horse oil.

POTAGES

Le consommé de cheval à l’ A B C

A la purée de destriers [warhorses].

Amontillado

POISSONS

Le saumon à la sauce Arabe.

Les filets de soles à l’huile hippophagique.

Vin du Rhin

HORS D’OEUVRES

Les terrines de foie maigre chevalines.

Les saucissons de cheval au pistaches Syriaques.

Xeres

RELEVÉES

Le filet de Pégase rôti aux pommes de terre à la crème.

Le dinde aux châtaignes.

L'Aloyau de cheval farci à la Centaur aux choux de Bruxelles.

La culotte de cheval braisée aux chevaux-de-frise.

Champagne sec

ENTRÉES

Les petites pâtés à la moëlle Bucéphale.

Kromeskys à la Gladiateur.

Les poulets garnis à l'hippogriffe.

Les langues de cheval à la Troyenne.

Chateau Perayne

SECOND SERVICE

RÔTS.

Les canards sauvages.

Les pluviers.

Volnay

Les mayonnaises des homard à l'huile Rosinante.

Les petits pois à la Française.

Les choux-fleurs au parmesan.

ENTREMETS

La gelée de pieds de cheval au marasquin.

Les zéphirs sautés à l'huile chevaleresque.

Le gâteau vétérinaire à la Ducroix.

Les feillantines aux pommes des Hesperides.

St. Peray

GLACES

De crème aux truffes.

Sorbets contre-préjugés.

Liqueurs

DESSERT

Vins fins de Bordeaux

BUFFET

Collared horsehead.

Baron of horse.

Boiled withers.

Reactions to the dinner were mixed. The reporter who covered the event for the *Times* wrote: “[I]t is quite possible to dine off horse, even at your first meal, without nausea. With very little effort of cookery, you will hardly distinguish it from beef. At your next meal, your appetite may come in eating.”

Frank Buckland, an eccentric zoologist notorious for his passion to test every creature he could find for its edibility, noted in his diary:

I devoutly wished I had the talent of a Hogarth to be able to record the various expressions — there seemed to be a dubious and inquisitive cast

various expressions . . . were seemed to be a dubious and inquisitive cast spread over the features of most who were present. . . . A very pleasant party at our end of the table, but the meat simply horrible.

DINNER WITH THOMAS JEFFERSON

1802: Virginia, USA

Thomas Jefferson entertained several guests at Monticello on this day. Congressman Manasseh Cutler was one of those present, and he described the meal in his journal:

Dined at the P[resident]'s . . . Rice soup, round of beef, turkey mutton, ham, loin of veal, cutlets of mutton or veal, fried eggs, fried beef, a pie called macaroni, which appears to be a rich crust filled with the strillions of onions or shallots, which I took it to be, tasted very strong and not agreeable. Mr. [Meriwether] Lewis told me there was none in it: it was an Italian dish, and what appeared like onions was made of flour and butter with a particularly strong liquor mixed with them. Ice cream very good, crust wholly dried, crumbled into thin flakes; a dish somewhat like a pudding—inside white as milk or curd, very porous and light covered with cream sauce; very fine. Many other jimcracks, a great variety of fruit, plenty of wines and good. President social. We drank tea and viewed again the great cheese.

See **January 1** for the mammoth cheese.

BIRD'S NEST SOUP

1858: England

The famous chef Alexis Soyer wrote a letter to the editor of the *Times* on this day (although it was not published) in response to a report from a special correspondent on Chinese food. Soyer was quite incorrect in his opinion of how the birds make the nests, but he does describe his own experience of eating the soup.

Sir, Since the very interesting letter on Chinese food by your Correspondent in last Thursday's paper, wherein he honoured me by mentioning my name, I have received various applications for information relative to the Chinese

Birds Nest, which they make into a soup as much appreciated there as Turtle is in England, the latter having created quite a sensation in the gastronomic world, the following particulars may interest your readers.

The nests are made by the Sea Swallow, the size of a Humming Bird called "Salangan". They are formed from the spawn of a fish of the Polypus kind which floats on the Chinese Seas in the months of March & April. The bird picks it up, as it skims the water, or from the rocks where it coagulates. They are about two months in preparing them and the Chinese will not take them away until the young birds are fledged, about the end of July or August.

The nests are small in the form of a half hollow, they are composed externally of a very thin laminae, nearly concentric laid one over the other. The interior presents several layers of irregular net work superimposed one over another and formed of a multitude of threads of the same matter as the external laminae which cross and recross in every direction

Their composition, which has a slight taste of salt, in color is of a yellowish white, and semitransparent, but if old is black; it softens in warm water without disforming, and increases in volume. It is a substantial food, and would be excellent for persons suffering from exhaustion, whose debile [debilitated] stomachs ill perform their functions. Nothing is more fortifying than a pottage made with these nests and some good meat stock.

The soup of which your correspondent partook was no doubt composed of strong chicken broth and meat, in which a puree of boiled rice and the breasts of the chicken pounded were added, and lastly the birds nests after having been cleaned and soaked either broken or whole. For the black nests the stock may be made the same as for turtle soup either thick or clear.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1747: Shalstone House, Buckinghamshire, England

Elizabeth Purefoy sent a new grocery order, along with a complaint about the previous delivery, to her London supplier:

I desire you will send mee

- One pound of the best Bohea Tea
- Half a pound of the best green Tea
- Two pounds of the best Coffeeberries
- A quarter of a pound of nutmegs
- Two ounces of mace
- A quarter of an hundred of the best treble refined Loaf sugar
- A quarter of an hundred of Household sugar about 6 pence a pound
- Haifa quarter of an hundred of Polish starch
- Half a quarter of an hundred of Rice

Send these by yf Buckingham carrier . . . send your Bill with them & will order you payment.

The last Bohea tea was so ordinary I could not drink it, my neighbours had as good for six shillings a pound. The last hundredweight of Raisins you sent were so bad they spoiled the Liquor they were made on. I hope you will send no more bad Goods, I have had no reason to complain till now, tho' I have dealt at yr shop these forty years.

FEBRUARY 7

A ROYAL WEDDING FEAST

1403: England

King Henry IV married Joan of Navarre at Winchester Cathedral on this day, and the ceremony was followed by a great feast. The extant documents list the individual dishes for three courses and then list those for three courses of fish. This does not imply that in fact six courses were served to all tables. Three was the usual number of courses for a high-class feast, but it was also usual for different dishes to be served to different classes of guests seated at different tables – those lower down in the hierarchy of course getting the less elegant

tables—those lower down in the hierarchy of course getting the less elegant dishes. The clergy were in a special class of their own, and as many of them, nominally at least, observed a meat-free diet, it is most likely that the three fish courses were for the bishops and other high-status clergy.

The first Course:

Fylettes in galentyne; Vyand ryall: [a dish prepared with rice, spices, wine and honey];

Gross chare [beef or mutton]; Sygnettes; Capoun of haut grece; Chewetys.

A Sotelte

The seconde course:

Venyson with furmente; Gelye; Porcellys [young pigs]; Conyng [rabbits];

Bittore: [bittern]; Puleyng farcez; Pertryche; Leche fryez; Brawne bruse.

A Sotelte.

The third course:

Crème de almaundys; Perys in syruppe; Venison rosted; Ryde; Woodecocke;

lovere; Rabettys; Qualys; Snytys; Feldfare; Crustade; Sturgeon; Frettoure;

A soltete.

The order of the Three Courses of Fish

The first Course:

Vyaund ryall; Sew lumbarde [a broth]; Salty fyshe; Lampreys powderyd;

Pyke; Breme; Samoun rostydy; Crustade lumbarde;

A soltete

The seconde course:

Purpayis [porpoise] en frumente; Gely; Breme; Saumoun; Congre;
Gurnade;

Plays; Lampreys in past; Leche frywz;

Panterys coronys for a soltete [a crowned panther].

The third course:

Crème of almaund; Perys in syrippe; Tenche enbrace; Troutez; Floundrys
fryid; Perchys;

Lampreys rosted: Lochys and cloys; Sturjoun; Crabbe and creveys;
Graspey.

Egle coronys in soltete [a crowned eagle]

COFFEE HISTORY

1615: Turkey

Pietro della Valle, a young Italian nobleman, left Venice on June 8, 1614, on an eleven-year journey to the East. Della Valle wrote a series of long letters to his friend Mario Schipano during his travels, and in his letter of February 7, 1615, written from Constantinople (Istanbul), he described an unusual Turkish drink, which was “unknown in my native country.” It is *cahue*, or coffee.

The Turks have a drink of black color, which during the summer is very cooling, whereas in the winter it heats and warms the body, remaining always the same beverage and not changing its substance. They swallow it hot as it comes from the fire and they drink it in long draughts, not at dinner time, but as a kind of dainty and sipped slowly while talking with one’s friends. One cannot find any meetings among them where they drink it not. . . . With this drink, which they call *cahue*, they divert themselves in their conversations. . . . It is made with the grain or fruit of a certain tree called *cahue*. . . .

The method of preparing it is this . . . by burning it [the fruit or seeds] to a

fine powder the color of black dust, so that it is preserved a long time. When you want to drink it, you boil water in vessels which have long thin beaks to allow it to be poured into small vessels to drink. After the water is boiled, the dust of the cahue is thrown in, and you let it boil again with the water a good while . . . you do not drink what remains in the bottom of the pot. If you want it more delicate, you add a quantity of sugar with cinnamon and a little carnation.

When I return I will bring some with me and I will impart the knowledge to the Italians.

U.S. STATE FOOD

2001: Pennsylvania, USA

The state adopted the chocolate chip cookie as the official state cookie on this day. The legislators saw fit to justify their decision in great detail.

WHEREAS, The chocolate chip cookie is the most popular type of cookie in America; and

WHEREAS, The chocolate chip cookie has been the most popular cookie of the children and adults of this Commonwealth for generations; and

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania leads the nation in the production of processed chocolate and cocoa; and

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania has more licensed bakeries than any other state in the nation; and

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania is a leading producer of the nation's snack foods; and

WHEREAS, Snack food production is a key element of the Commonwealth's number one industry, agriculture; and

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania is the nation's fourth largest producer of milk, which is the perfect partner to the chocolate chip cookie; and

WHEREAS, Naming an official cookie of the Commonwealth would

WHEREAS, having an official cookie of the Commonwealth would recognize the steadfast and loyal devotion of the citizens of Pennsylvania to the chocolate chip cookie; therefore

The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania hereby enacts as follows:

Section 1. The chocolate chip cookie is hereby selected, designated and adopted as the official cookie of the Commonwealth.

Section 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

The state of Massachusetts also recognizes the chocolate chip cookie as an official state icon.

FOOD FIRSTS

1205: Italy

Panforte: The name of this traditional Italian dessert cake literally means “strong bread”—the “strong” referencing the spiciness, not the density, of the confection. Originally the most significant spice used was pepper, hence one of its earlier names of “pepper bread.” In a document dated February 7, 1205, a quantity of *panpepati e mielati* (“pepper and honey bread”) is mentioned as an annual tithe due to the nuns of the convent of Montecellesi (Montecelso), in Siena, from the inhabitants and servants of the convent.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1665: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys: “Up, and to my office, where busy all morning. At noon, at dinner, it being Shrove Tuesday, had some very good fritters.”

1760: Spain



Tomatoes, known as love-apples at that time in England

From *Letters from Portugal, Spain, Italy and Germany in the years 1759, 1760, and 1761*, by Christopher Hervey. He mentions tomatoes, which were known as love-apples at that time in England but were still not in wide use.

This agreeable interruption caused us to walk into the next room, where there was a little table with two chairs, and a dish of soup in the middle attended on the sides by one of boiled apples and another of pomegranate jelly. After the soup in came the olio, or as the Spaniards write it olla, which is merely a Spanish term for boiled meat, that word signifying a pot, continens pro contento. We have an odd idea of a Spanish olio, as being a made-up dish composed of a thousand different sorts of meat, and peculiar to the nation. They do, indeed, often mix different kinds of meat together, and always fat of bacon with whatever other flesh they put into it, but then every thing is merely plain boiled. The olla podrida, or rotten olio, is, indeed, made up of game and richer materials stewed together, I think, and is, I believe, the dish we mean when we make use of that name. Indeed the chief of Spanish cookery consists in boiling or stewing, for as the common people in these parts have few spits and no jacks, they rarely have any roast

meat, and when they have it is turned by hand or by a dog. Nor do they much understand sauces. Saffron and honey is what they generally put to most things; saffron to their meats, and honey to their pastry. They are besides very fond of a fruit called *tomates*, which they mash, and eat with a number of things. We have some in England, where they go by the name of love-apples.

1848: Australia

Annabella Boswell, of Lake Innes, near Port Macquarie, wrote of her attempts at making “squab pie,” which does not contain any squabs (baby pigeons) at all. It is a specialty of Devon in southwestern England.

I picked some fresh apples for a squab pie. . . . Afterward, finding that the cook was out, I carried my materials to the marble slab and determined to make the pie myself—but before I tell what this famous squab pie was composed of I shall give my opinion of its merits by saying that though it is possible I may make another, it is highly improbable that I shall taste it, Mr Hugh was of a different opinion, or pretended to be, for he dined on it—and insisted on doing so, the pie is made of layers of apple and beef steak covered with pie crust, and baked, pepper and salt of course, but cook says I should have added an onion.

Devonshire Squab Pie

Lay mutton-chops, or mutton, at the bottom of the dish; on the meat strew some onions, with pepper, salt, a little sugar, and half a tea-cupful of water. Place on the top apples and potatoes, in layers, cut thin; cover the sides and top of the dish with crust, and bake well.

—*English and Australian Cookery Book* (1864), by Edward Abbott

1868: London, England

Frank Buckland, recovering from the horseflesh meal the day before (*see February 6*), wrote in his diary: “Very seedy indeed; partly effects of horse, partly of a very bad cold; felt queer all day.”

FEBRUARY 8

A MARRIAGE FEAST

1671: Paris, France

A spectacular fête was held at the Hôtel de Guise after the marriage by procuration of Marie-Angelique-Henriette de Louise (daughter of a Spanish nobleman) to the Portuguese Duke of Cadaval. Following the ceremony the Queen gave a supper for “forty ladies,” followed by a ball. The supper was so *magnifique* and the table so “ingenious” that news of it spread rapidly across Europe. The Grand Duke Cosimo III de Medici, whose wife was related to the Guises, was particularly determined to find out every detail and instructed his agent in Paris to investigate and report. The report finally arrived on May 15, and some of the highlights were as follows:

The principal banquet table was twenty-four feet long and seven feet wide. In the center stood twelve small silver basins full of “all sorts of flowers, although they are scarce at this time of year,” and nine candelabra, each holding nine candles.

The food was displayed on a total of thirty-five large silver dishes. Four more silver platters were placed close to the Queen and several especially honoured ladies.

The menu consisted of four soups, four entrées, four different roast meats, 128 salads, four entremets, and fruit.

The entrées were presented on four “machines,” each constructed of four porcelain bowls and nine pots in the finest export porcelain, “the whole filled with the very best and the rarest” edibles. Around these machines were displayed the roasts and salads.

The fruit had been arranged on gilded pyramids that were four levels high and that held nineteen porcelain dishes filled with “the finest raw fruit that could be found at this time of year, garnished with all sorts of flowers,” creating a “rather fine effect.”

Fourteen other porcelain dishes held “all sorts of dried fruit, fruit pastes,

marzipan and biscuits,” and there were also priceless china bowls and dishes containing “all sorts of liquids” and “all sorts of creams, some of them whipped.”

The agent summed up by saying “As for the other tables it is pointless to describe how they were served, for this one was the most important.” Cosimo, however, apparently wished there had been more details as to the symmetry of the tables and other similar features.

WHALE MEAT ON THE MENU

1918: USA

The *New York Times* described a wartime conservation luncheon held on this day:

Natural History Museum Presents War Substitute for Beef, Pork, and Mutton

Some Say It Tastes Like Pot Roast, and Others That It Much Resembles Venison

A conservation luncheon with whale meat served as steaks and in three other dishes was given at the American Museum of Natural History . . . “as a demonstration of the utility of whale meat as a substitute for beef, lamb, pork, and other meats which the nation is advised to conserve.”

Menu

Hors d’oeuvre—Whale.

Whale pot au feu.

Corn pone. Nut butter. Delmonico war bread.

Boiled skate. Mustard sauce.

Parsley potatoes.

Planked whale steak, a la Vancouver.

Border of samp. Onion sauce.

Vegetable salad.

Ice cream. Bisque of black bread, a la Delmonico.

Ginger bread with raw sugar. Coffee.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1793: Britain

The third British patent (No. 1933) for a method of food preservation was issued to William Jayne for a method of preserving eggs. The eggs could be kept “for the space of two years at the least . . . by immersing them in a mixture of such specific gravity as to allow of their floating in it; this mixture to be composed of the following substances in certain proportions: Quicklime, salt, cream of tartar, with water.”

FOOD & WAR

1918: London, England, World War I

The Ministry of Food announced that the meat ration in London and the Home Counties would be twenty ounces per adult per week. The newspapers explained how the system would work:

The system adopted is somewhat complex. The meat card, available for 20 weeks, provides four coupons weekly, three of which entitle the holder to purchase uncooked, but choice meat, including pork. Each coupon represents the value of five-pence. The fourth coupon entitles the holder to purchase bacon, ham, poultry, game, rabbits, and preserved or prepared meats in an amount equivalent to five ounces of butcher’s meat.

The coupons can be used in restaurants, each half coupon entitling the holder to one meat meal.

The present prices of meat vary from about 1s per lb. for inferior grades to 1s 9d for the best cuts, so that a person content with inferior cuts can obtain rather over 1 lb of butcher's meat for three coupons of a total value of 15d. Children under 10 years are entitled to half a ration.

It is understood that the present meat ration in Germany is about $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. weekly.

TABLE DÉCOR

1753: England

Horace Walpole (1717–1797), the fourth earl of Orford, wrote a short piece on the current fashion for intricate centerpieces for the table, some made from sugar, and many with an exotic or Oriental theme. The article was published on this day in the *World*.

Jellies, biscuits, sugar plumbs and creams have long since given way to harlequins, gondoliers, Turks, Chinese and shepherdesses of Saxon china. But these, unconnected, and only seeming to wander among groves of curled paper and silk flowers, were soon discovered to be too insipid and unmeaning. By degrees whole meadows of cattle, of the same brittle materials, spread themselves over the whole table; cottages rose in sugar, and temples in barley-sugar; pigmy Neptunes in cars of cockle-shells triumphed over oceans of looking glass or seas of silver tissue, and at length the whole system of Ovid's metamorphosis succeeded to all the transformations which Chloe and other great professors had introduced into the science of hieroglyphic eating. Confectioners found their trade moulder away, while toymen and china-shops were the only fashionable purveyors of the last stage of polite entertainments. Women of the first quality came home from Chenevix's [a porcelain manufacturer] laden with dolls and babies, not for their children, but for their housekeeper. At last even these puerile puppet shows are sinking into disuse, and more manly ways of concluding our repasts are established. Gigantic figures succeed to pigmies, and of the present taste contrives, Rysbrack, and other neglected statuataries, who might have adorned Grecian salons, though not Grecian desserts, may come into vogue.

FOOD & RELIGION

1630: England

The number of “fasting”—that is, non-meat-eating—days ordered by religious and secular authorities fluctuated over the centuries, but for some periods applied to three days per week. It was possible, on medical grounds, to obtain a dispensation from the restrictions, however, as the following record of the parish of Wakefield shows.

Whereas Alice Lister, . . . by reason of her old age & many years & state, and long-contynued sickness is become so weake, and her stomacke so colde, not able to digest colde meates and fish, who by the counsel of Physicians is advised to abstaine from and forbear the eateng of all manner of fruits, fish, and milk meates: Know ye therfoor for the causes aforesaide and for the better strengthening & recovery of her health, I the saide James Lister to hereby give & grante libertie and licence to here the saide Alice Lister att her will and pleasure att alltymes, as well as during the tyme of Lent, as upon other fasting daies and fish daies (exhibiting by the laws to eate flesh) to dresse and eate such kind of fleshe as shal be best agreing to her stomach & weake appetite. In witness hereof I the saide James Lister have hereunto sett my hand the eight day of february in the sixth year . . . of our Lord god 1630.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1786: Paris, France

Thomas Jefferson wrote to his friend James Madison from France:

P. S. Could you procure & send me an hundred or two nuts of the peccan? they would enable me to oblige some characters here whom I should be much gratified to oblige. They should come packed in sand. The seeds of the sugar maple too would be a great present.

FOOD & WAR

1807: Prussia, Napoleonic Wars

The Baron de Marbot recorded in his memoir some of the events of the Battle of Eylau, which took place on the 7th and 8th of February. Marbot wrote:

Though the attack had not been made by the Emperor's orders, he did not refuse to profit by it, and established himself accordingly in the posting-house at Eylau. His Guard and Soult's corps occupied the town, while Murat's cavalry was stationed round it. Augereau's troops were quartered in the little hamlet of Zehen. We had hoped to find some supplies there; but the Russians had plundered everything in their retreat, and our unlucky regiments, who had received no rations for a week, found no better comfort than potatoes and water. The store-wagons of the staff having been left at Landsberg, our supper was even less satisfactory than that of the men, for we could not get any potatoes. At eight in the morning [February 8], just as we were about to mount and advance, a servant brought a loaf to the marshal, who, with his usual kindness, shared it with his aides-de-camp. After this frugal meal—the last, as it turned out, which many of us ate—the corps proceeded to take up the position which the Emperor had assigned it.

1945: Germany, World War II

An RAF POW wrote of the evacuation of Stalag Luft VII in his diary:

My last slice of bread has gone. Train never seems to travel for more than an hour before grinding to a halt. Half cup coffee per man. Protests about shortage of food to Germans, 30 trains ahead of us waiting to pass through a large town ahead. Many men being taken to hospital truck. Medical Officer and Staff unable to cope. Now eating flour and oats—a sickening concoction.

LAST MEAL

1924: USA

The first execution by lethal gas took place in the United States on this day. Gee Jon's last meal before he was executed for murder was a breakfast of ham, eggs, toast, and coffee.

FEBRUARY 9

THE ARCHBISHOP'S BILL OF FARE

1568: Spain

The bill of fare for Juan de Ribera, archbishop of Valencia (1568–1611), on this day was as follows:

Dinner: eaten by His Lordship and 4 gentlemen

Bread, wine, and sweet oranges

2 roast hens

6 roast partridges

Pastry of half a kid goat

Roast wild boar

Mutton meatballs with 8 egg yolks

Boiled mutton, 2 pounds

Turnips in bacon

Boiled pork, 2 pounds

Apples, 4 pounds

2 cardoons

olives and cheese, 50 walnuts

Supper: eaten by His Lordship and 2 gentlemen

Uncommon entree

3 roasted partridges

1 rabbit

3 young rabbits

Small heads of roast kid goats

Cheese pie

6 eggs

Uncommon desserts

A ONE-SHILLING MEAL

1944: England

The king and queen of England sat down in the Elescar Colliery Canteen in Yorkshire on this day to the same one-shilling meal served to the miners. On this occasion the menu was hot roast beef, Brussels sprouts, roast and boiled potatoes, golden pudding, and coffee, and there were jugs of free beer and mineral waters. The only concession made to the royal visitors was that white linen tablecloths were laid. In what was a superb demonstration of *noblesse oblige*, the queen told the working men afterward, “it is a long time since we have had a better meal.”

The visit had been arranged because the King had expressed a wish to study the mining industry firsthand. He and the Queen donned overalls and inspected the open-cast mines.

FOOD FIRSTS

1666: France

King Louis XIV signed letters patent granting to David Chaliou “for a period of twenty-nine years the exclusive privilege of making and selling chocolate in the form of liquid, pastilles, boxes, or any other form.”

1790: USA

The first American advertisement featuring coffee alone appeared in the *New*

York Daily Advertiser on this day.

New Coffee Manufactory Highly Necessary in This City

The subscriber informs the public that he has provided himself with proper utensils at a considerable expense, to burn, grind and clarify Coffee on the European plan, so as to give general satisfaction: this useful Manufactory would save the inhabitants, on reflection, considerable, in that article, as it is often thro' want of knowledge, or wrong management injured and spoiled by trusting to careless servants; whereas one making it his business to serve the citizens with coffee ready prepared would be able to make it better and sell it cheaper than it could be bought in the grain, besides loss of time, waste, and expence. This undertaking invites the public to try the experiment, as it may be had in pots of various sizes from one to twenty weight, well packed down either for sea or family use, so as to keep good for twelve months, and be clear.

Apply at No. 4, Great Dock Street.

FOOD & BOOKS

1852: USA

The first consumer's wine guide in the United States, the *Hand-book of Wines, Practi-*

cal, Theoretical, and Historical: with a Description of Foreign Spirits and Liqueurs, was completed by Thomas McMullen of New York City.

The book is extremely comprehensive. The author discusses every aspect of the wine-making process, all wine-growing areas and wine types, the medicinal qualities of wine, and the art of wine-drinking. In the section on "Fermentation" he said:

The primary cause of fermentation, like that of other chemical agencies, will probably always remain hidden from our view; and an approximation to the truth, is the most that can be expected on such a subject; we must rest satisfied with the knowledge of the principal conditions on which it depends; and by which the qualities of its products are influenced.

A few years later, in 1856, Louis Pasteur published his seminal work, *Researches on Fermentation*, in which he connected the process with yeast.

I am of the opinion that alcoholic fermentation never occurs without simultaneous organization, development, and multiplication of cells. . . . If asked, in what consists the chemical act whereby the sugar is decomposed . . . I am completely ignorant of it.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1663: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

Could not rise and go to the Duke, as I should have done with the rest, but keep my bed and by the Apothecary's advice, Mr. Battersby, I am to sweat soundly, and that will carry all this matter away which nature would of itself eject, but they will assist nature, it being some disorder given the blood, but by what I know not, unless it be by my late quantitys of Dantzic-girkins that I have eaten.

FEBRUARY 10

COFFEE HISTORY

1733: St. Helena Island

Seeds of the green-tipped Bourbon arabica coffee plant from Yemen arrived at the island aboard the East India ship *Houghton*. The coffee subsequently grown on the island was considered very fine in quality. It was enjoyed by Napoleon Bonaparte during his exile. It won a premier award at the Great Exhibition at the Crystal Palace, London, in 1851.

The coffee produced on the island still comes from the same pure, original strain of green-tipped Bourbon arabica.

WEDDING CAKE HISTORY

1840: England

The cake at the wedding of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert was very spectacular and set a fashionable precedent for wedding cakes of the time. The cake weighed 300 pounds (136 kilograms) and was 9 feet 4 inches (2.84 meters) in circumference. A second tier supported by two pedestals featured a sculpture of the mythical heroine Britannia gazing upon the royal couple, at whose feet were two turtle doves (symbolizing purity and innocence), a dog (representing faithful attachment), and a number of cupids, one of whom was recording the date of the wedding on a tablet.

ANNIVERSARY

1775: London, England

Charles Lamb (1775–1834), the English essayist, was born on this day. One of the most popular pieces of food prose in the English language is his *Dissertation on Roast Pig* from *Essays of Elia*.

Pig—let me speak his praise—is no less provocative of the appetite than he is satisfactory to the criticalness of the censorious palate. The strong may batten on him, and the weakling refuseth not his mild juices.

He must be roasted. I am not ignorant that our ancestors ate them seethed, or boiled—but what a sacrifice of the exterior tegument!

There is no flavour comparable, I will contend, to that of the crisp, tawny, well-watched, not over-roasted, crackling, as it is well called—the very teeth are invited to their share of the pleasure at this banquet in overcoming the coy, brittle resistance—with the adhesive oleaginous—O call it not fat—but an indefinable sweetness growing up to it—the tender blossoming of fat—fat cropped in the bud—taken in the shoot—in the first innocence—the cream and quintessence of the child-pig’s yet pure food—the lean, no lean, but a kind of animal manna—or, rather, fat and lean (if it must be so) so blended and running into each other, that both together make but one ambrosian result, or common substance.

RESTAURANT HISTORY

1916: Calgary, Canada

Five hundred men, most of them in uniform, broke into the White Lunch restaurant and completely destroyed the interior on this day. The riot was triggered by a rumor that the American-born manager with a German name had fired a World War I veteran and replaced him with an Austrian. The manager said that the veteran had refused to perform some of the jobs for which he was hired, so he was replaced. The military ordered an inquiry into the riot.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1669: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys. He watched the preparation of a “universal sauce.”

So to Whitehall, where I stayed till the Duke of York came from hunting. . . . Here he dined, and did mightily magnify his Sawce whiche did then eat with everything, and said it was the best universal sauce in the world—it being taught him by the Spanish Ambassador—made of some parsley and a dry toast, beat in a mortar together with vinegar, salt, and a little pepper. He eats it with flesh or fowl or fish, And then he did now mightily commend some new sort of wine lately found out, called Navarr wine; which I tasted, and is I think good wine, but I did like better the notion of the Sawce and by and by did taste it, and liked it mightily.

FEBRUARY 11

PORRIDGE

1931: Calgary, Canada

A porridge kitchen opened on this day to feed the men made jobless by the Great Depression. The premises were donated by the city, and country people donated the oats, which were transported at no charge by freight companies and ground at no cost by milling concerns. Sugar and milk were purchased cheaply; four people were employed in making and serving the porridge. Fifty bowls and spoons were donated and were washed and reused many times. Men could return

spoons were donated and were washed and reused many times. Men could return to the line as often as they wished. The organizer, Mr. Ryland, hoped that the result would be that “Men cannot starve or have any reason for begging.”

PASTA

1789: Naples

William Short wrote to Thomas Jefferson from Naples to report his success in acquiring a machine for making “macaroni” (although he confused this with spaghetti):

I procured at Naples, according to request, the mould for making maccaroni. It is of a smaller diameter than that used at the manufactories of maccaroni, but of the same diameter with others that have been sent to gentlemen in. other countries. I went to see them made. I observed that the maccaroni most esteemed at Naples was smaller than that generally seen at Paris. This is the part of Italy most famous for the excellence of the article.

Jefferson’s Recipe for Pasta, as Written in His Own Hand

- 6 eggs. yolks & whites.
- 2 wine glasses of milk
- 2 tb of flour
- a [?] salt
- work them together without water, and very well.
- roll it then with a roller to a paper thickness
- cut it into small peices which roll again with the hand into long slips, & then cut them to a proper length.
- put them into warm water a quarter of an hour.

- drain them.
- dress them as macaroni.
- but if they are intended for soups they are to be put in the soup & not into warm water

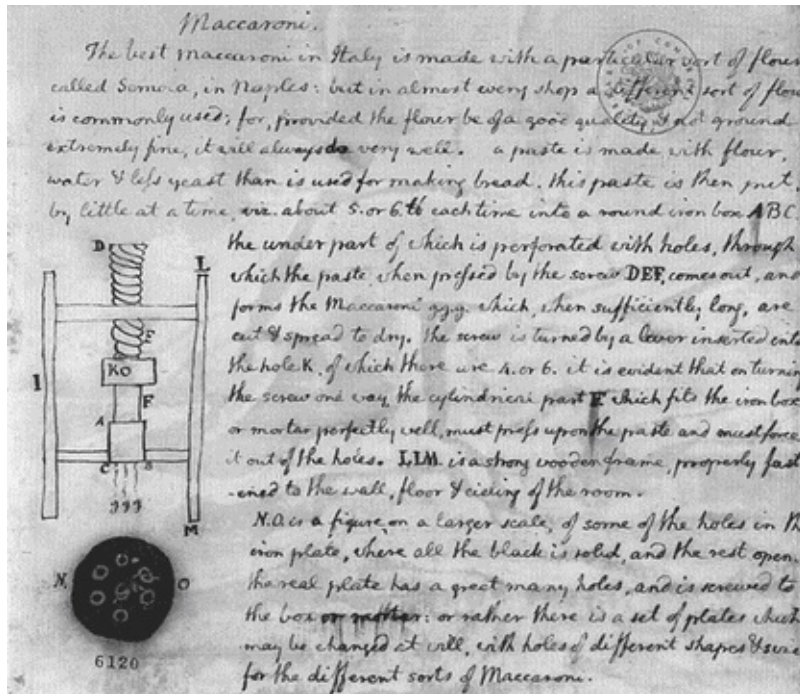


Image of Jefferson's macaroni machine

(Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, [Reproduction number e.g., LC-MSS-27748-180])

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1867: Africa

From David Livingstone's journal of his expedition to find the source of the Nile. He was in the Upper Loanga region of central Africa and involved in the prolonged process of negotiating passage: "The chief sent a basket of hippopotamus flesh, and one of green maize. He says a box—a tin one, must be given."

There is always a great deal of interest in the flavour of exotic meats—the curiosity is there even among those who have no intention of actually sampling it. The *Food Journal* (London, 1871) began a series on African foods, and the first article was on the hippopotamus.

The flesh of the hippopotamus is well esteemed, and the meat does not taste unlike beef, according to Du Chaillu, who considers it rather coarse grained, and not fat, but a welcome and wholesome dish. The blacks are very fond of it; but we think we should have heard more of its virtues from the travellers and explorers in Africa, if they had liked it equally well. They almost all pass it *sub silentio*.

We have, however, in this matter, the advantage of being able to refer to the opinion of some who have tasted hippopotamus flesh in London, and who have been able to bring it to the test of a more normal appetite, than those who may have dined on it in its native haunts. A fine young specimen, which was exhibited in the Crystal Palace, was roasted alive when the eastern wing of that building was burned. We remember paying a visit to the ruins the morning after the fire, and a policeman pointing out to us among the chaotic heap of twisted iron pipes, burned bricks, and broken glass, a black, leathery-looking, charred mass. This was the hippopotamus, which, upon being more closely examined, did not at all appear so distasteful a morsel as at a first glance. True, the skin was leathery and charred; but it had split in places like crackling, exposing a beautifully delicate white meat or fat underneath. We made some proposition for acquiring the specimen, both for gourmandise and science, but Dr. Crisp was more prompt, and secured it before us, and he has given an account of his dissection of it in the *Proceedings of the Zoological Society*. He there tells us that one side of the animal was well roasted, and that he supplied some of his friends with the meat thus cooked—gipsy fashion—and partook of it several times himself. He reports the flavour as excellent, and the colour of the flesh whiter than that of any veal that he ever saw. The fat lay under the skin as in the hog, and not in the interior, as in the elephant; it was about 1½ inches in thickness. This fat is much esteemed by the inhabitants of south-east Africa, and is salted and preserved, under the name of Sea Cow's-Speck.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1660: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys. Pepys, a passionate Royalist, described the situation in London immediately after the restoration of King Charles II to the throne. The incidents he described became known as “the Burning of the Rump,” in reference to the so-called Rump Parliament—the nickname given to the Parliament of the Commonwealth of England during the Civil War.

But the common joy that was everywhere to be seen! The number of bonfires [*sic*] . . . and all along burning and roasting and drinking for rumps—there being rumps tied upon sticks and carried up and down. The butchers at the maypole in the Strand rang a peal with their knives when they were going to sacrifice their rump. On Ludgate hill there was one turning of the spit, that had a rump tied upon it, and another basting of it. Indeed it was past imagination, both the greatness and the suddenness of it.

1677: France

The Marquise de Sévigné was a French aristocrat who kept up a long correspondence with her married daughter who lived some distance away, and her letters are a fascinating source of information about seventeenth-century France. At that time, chocolate was new, expensive, and very fashionable: “If you are not feeling well, if you have not slept, chocolate will revive you. But you have no chocolate! I think of that again and again! My dear, how will you ever manage?”

FEBRUARY 12

LINCOLN DINNER

1903: New York, USA

The seventeenth dinner in commemoration of the birth of Abraham Lincoln given by the Republican Club was held at the Waldorf-Astoria on this day. The banquet was attended by more than 500 men “and in a room adjoining the large banquet hall, the wives and guests of the members dined to the number of 100.” The menu was as follows:

Feuilles de Laitue, Suedoise

Huitres

Potage Lemardelais Crème d'artichauts

Radis Olives Celeri Amandes salees

Filet de Bass a la Grand Duc

Tomates farcies aux concombres

Ris-de-veau a la Toulouse

Carre d'Agneau rotis en casserole

Petits pois a la Francaise

Asperges Oyster Bay, Sauce Hollandaise

Sorbet de Fantaisie

Canard tete rouge Salad de Saison

Glaces de fantaisie

Petits fours Fruits

Café

Mumms Extra Dry Appolinaris.

FOOD & WAR

1429: France

The "Battle of the Herrings" took place on this day during the English siege of Orleans, which had begun the previous October. The men of Orleans (assisted by their old allies, the Scots) attempted to intercept a convoy of three hundred English wagons containing "herrings and Lenten stuff" for the besieging army.

The French suffered a profound defeat, but Joan of Arc entered the city on March 12, eventually relieving the siege on May 8.

1914: The Commission for Relief in Belgium

Herbert Hoover, the chairman of the Commission for Relief in Belgium, wrote to Baron Von Bissing, the governor-general of German-occupied Belgium, reminding him of his (the Baron's) promises in regard to the proper allocation of the foodstuffs sent to the country:

If Your Excellency will recollect when this work was initiated the English Government strongly objected to the introduction of foodstuffs into Belgium from neutral states, on the ground that it was relieving the Germans from the duty of themselves feeding the Belgians, as the Germans would themselves have to deplete their own stores of foodstuffs to prevent the Belgians from starving; that, therefore, this service was a great military advantage to the Germans and a great military disadvantage to the English.

It was only on the strongest pressure that the American ambassador in London and the American minister in Brussels were able to secure the assent of the English Government to their proposal, and it was only on condition that these gentlemen, with the approval of the American Government, guarantee the undertaking of the German Government that these foodstuffs should reach the civil population only; moreover, the English Government finally consented on the stipulation that such machinery be set up in the shape of an organization as would satisfactorily demonstrate that these guarantees would be carried out.

It was for this primary reason that "The Commission for Relief in Belgium" was founded and that a number of American volunteers were recruited to undertake the work. It was stipulated that in order to carry out the work without any question of doubt as to the ultimate destination of the foodstuffs, this transportation and delivery should be under the members of this Commission.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1957: Minnesota, USA

Frederick M. Jones, of Minneapolis, received Patent No. 2780923 for a “Method and Means of Preserving Perishable Foodstuffs in Transit”:

In general the invention is concerned with providing more perfect atmospheric conditions with respect to temperature, humidity, and other atmospheric conditions necessary for preserving perishable foods such as fresh produce, between the times of harvesting and distribution.

2002: USA, Famine Food

The French company Nutriset was granted Patent No. 6346284 for its product Plumpy’nut. The product is a peanut-based, ready-to-use therapeutic food intended for the treatment of severe malnutrition. The granting of the patent has not been without significant controversy on ethical grounds, the claim being made that a commercial patent should not be applicable to a revolutionary product that has the potential to save millions of children’s lives.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt’s journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

Messrs. Gilbert and Calvert went in search of the dog, and were fortunate enough to find him with the emu which he had killed. We were rejoiced at our success, and lost no time in preparing a repast of fried emu; and, whilst we were thus employed, the two Blackfellows, having filled their bellies and had their sulk out, made their appearance, both considerably alarmed as to the consequences of their ill-behaviour. Charley brought about a pint of honey as a peace-offering; and both were unusually obliging and attentive to my companions.

. . . A crow was shot and roasted, and found to be exceedingly tender, which we considered to be a great discovery; and lost no opportunity of shooting as many as we could, in order to lessen the consumption of our dried meat. We again enjoyed some fine messes of Portulaca.

LAST MEAL

1771: Sweden

King Adolf Frederick (born 1710) died suddenly, probably from a stroke, after enjoying a meal of lobster, caviar, sauerkraut, smoked herring, and champagne, followed by fourteen servings of his favourite dessert—*semla*—served in a bowl of hot milk. He is popularly known as “the king who ate himself to death.”

Semla is a bun made from fine wheat flour filled with cream and/or almond paste. It is traditionally eaten on Fat Tuesday.

FEBRUARY 13

THE POTATO

1795: Britain

The Board of Agriculture resolved on this day to look into the culture and use of the potato, which was not then in widespread use in Britain. The decision was made on the basis of information provided by the president of the board at a meeting a few days previously.

The President stated to the Board [on February 10], that he had requested the attendance of as many Members as possible, for the purpose of submitting to their consideration what had occurred to him on the apprehended scarcity of grain: That from any information which either he or the Secretary of the Board had been able to collect, it appeared, that though the crop had failed in some parts of the kingdom, or rather did not yield what was expected from the very promising appearance on the ground, yet that in other districts it had been nearly as abundant as usual: That, on the whole, there was no reason to apprehend either famine or even great scarcity; at the same time, as no surplus stock of grain was likely to remain, precautions were necessary against the risk either of a late harvest, or of any accident happening to the crops now on the ground: That the most effectual remedy which had occurred to him was, to encourage, as much as possible, an increased culture of potatoes, which could be cultivated almost in any ground, and might be planted where wheat could not be raised at all;

or at any rate was not likely to be sown during the present season: That if the next crop were deficient, potatoes would be a certain resource as food for man; or if the crop were abundant, they might be converted to the purpose of fattening stock, a matter which also required the particular attention of the Board, from the high price of meat at present, and the little prospect there is of a fall: and that he flattered himself the Board had so far established its character in the public estimation that it might safely rely on a very general support in carrying any measure into full effect, of such essential consequence to the public interest. On the whole, he begged leave to submit the following Resolutions to the Board:

RESOLVED.

That an increased cultivation of that valuable root, the Potatoe, appears to the Board, to be one of the most important objects, that can possibly be recommended to the attention of British farmers.

That much information respecting the cultivation and use of that valuable root, having been communicated to the Board, a committee be appointed to draw up a Report upon the subject; and that the same, when approved of by the Board, shall be printed and circulated for the public use.

That it be recommended to the Members of the Board, to promote in the several districts with which they are connected, the culture of potatoes as much as possible.

These Resolutions being adopted by the Board, on the 13th of February, gave rise to the following Report.

THE FLOUR RIOT

1837: New York

Rioting broke out in the city on this day, triggered by the high cost of flour (and hence bread), which had more than doubled over a short period. A public meeting in front of city hall had been called to discuss the high price of provisions, and the audience was addressed by several impassioned speakers, one of whom called them to action with the words, "Fellow-citizens, Mr. Hart has now 53,000 barrels of flour in his store; let us go and offer him eight dollars

a barrel, and if he does not take it . . . ”—at this point, some person present touched him on his shoulder, whereupon he finished, in a quieter tone, “we shall depart from him in peace.”

His intent appeared to be understood, however, for the audience of concerned citizen-patriots became a mob and broke into the warehouse of Mr. Eli Hart, one of the city’s biggest flour dealers. Thousands of barrels and bags of flour were smashed and otherwise destroyed.

TEA HISTORY

1684: Britain

The taste for tea was growing in the second half of the seventeenth century, but there was still no regular, formal import system. Most of the tea arriving in Britain at the time came via the private activities of agents of the East India Company. The directors of the company wrote to their agents in Madras on this day:

In regard *thea* is grown to be a commodity here, and we have occasion to make presents therein to our great friends at court, we would have you to send to us yearly five or six canisters of the very best and freshest *thea*. That which will colour the water in which it is infused most of a greenish complexion is generally best accepted.

POSSET

1744: USA



Posset cup

(Science Museum, London, Wellcome Images)

The *New York Gazette* gave a rhyming recipe for “sack posset,” a traditional wedding drink. The rhyme was said to have been written by Sir Fleetwood Fletcher.

A Receipt for all young Ladies that are going to be Married

To make a SACK-POSSET

From famed Barbadoes on the Western Main

Fetch sugar half a pound; fetch sack from Spain

A pint; and from the Eastern Indian Coast
Nutmeg, the glory of our Northern toast.
O'er flaming coals together let them heat
Till the all-conquering sack dissolves the sweet.
O'er such another fire set eggs, twice ten,
New born from crowing cock and speckled hen;
Stir them with steady hand, and conscience pricking
To see the untimely fate of twenty chicken.
From shining shelf take down your brazen skillet,
A quart of milk from gentle cow will fill it.
When boiled and cooked, put milk and sack to egg,
Unite them firmly like the triple League.
Then covered close, together let them dwell
Till Miss twice sings: You must not kiss and tell.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1923: USA

Joseph Rosefield of Alameda, California, was granted Patent No. 1445174 for "Peanut Butter and Process of Manufacturing the Same." The purpose of his invention was to "overcome some inherent faults to all peanut butters now being manufactured." The principle problems related to peanut butter were "the tendency of the oil to separate from the solids and rise to the top after standing a few weeks, thereby presenting the customer a poor-looking and unsaleable product, the tendency of the peanut butter to stick to the roof of the mouth, and the impossibility of packing the same in waxed cartons."

Rosefield's process involved fine grinding, hydrogenation, and emulsification. This enabled the shelf life of peanut butter, without separating, to be up to one year.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1493: The New World

Christopher Columbus wrote a letter to the Spanish Treasury on this day, asking for assistance and mentioning the spices and other treasures he had found on his travels:

Finally, and speaking only of what has taken place in this voyage . . . their Highnesses may see that I shall give them all the gold they require, if they will give me but a little assistance; spices also, and cotton, as much as their Highnesses shall command to be shipped; and mastic, hitherto found only in Greece . . . ; slaves, as many of these idolators as their Highnesses shall command to be shipped. I think also I have found rhubarb and cinnamon, and I shall find a thousand other valuable things.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1768: England

Benjamin Franklin was living in London and missing the foods of home. He wrote to his daughter:

My Dear Child,

I have received also the Indian and buckwheat meal, that they brought from you, with the apples, cranberries, and nuts, for all which I thank you. They all prove good, and the apples were particularly welcome to me and my friends, as there happens to be scarce any of any kind in England this year. We are much obliged to the captains, who are so good as to bring these things for us, without charging any thing for their trouble.

1857: Britain

The famous Victorian celebrity chef Alexis Soyer wrote a letter to the editor of the *Times* on this day, in which he advises of a gift of *foie gras* that he has sent:

Dear Sir,

During your absence from London, I passed through Strasburgh, and from thence took the opportunity of sending you a *pate de foie gras*, which I directed to be taken to your private residence. It was not taken in on account of your absence in America. In hopes of being more fortunate this time I beg to forward you another made under my special superintendence at the first house in the city, and which I can assert is the perfection of that very delicate and far renowned article, so high in repute throughout Europe: also a Pate de Gibier d'Alsace, which though made of very simple materials, claims a honourable place in the Gastronomic world. Your acceptance of both will confer much pleasure upon your very grateful, and obedient servant

A. SOYER

PS took the opportunity of sending you a pate de foie gras, which I directed to be taken to your private residence, I addressed a letter upon the subject to the local paper (the *Courier du Bas Rhin*) upon the subject, the reading of which may probably induce Madam to degustate the pie without terror and with greater relish. A.S

FEBRUARY 14

SAINT VALENTINE'S DAY

Saint Valentine was a third-century saint about whom little is known—and indeed, several saints have been associated with this name. His exact identity remains obscure. At some time in the early Middle Ages, his name became associated with the concept of courtly love, and this association lies behind our modern traditions of Valentine's Day.

Celebratory rituals and traditions on this day are an amalgamation of ancient pagan and Christian beliefs and traditions. The predominant food now associated with the day is undoubtedly chocolate, but this is a fairly recent phenomenon as eating chocolate—distinct from the beverage—only dates to the latter half of the

nineteenth century.

In some parts of northern England it used to be traditional for godparents to give their godchildren “Valentine buns.” Valentine buns were sweet “plum” buns (that is, they contained currants or raisins) sometimes flavored with caraway seeds. Many saints’ days were times for divination, and in some parts of Britain, young women would place five bay leaves on their pillow, in the expectation that this would ensure they would dream about their future husband.

BULLSHOT FOR THE QUEEN MOTHER

1965: Jamaica

The Queen Mother made an official visit to Jamaica and visited her old friend, the playwright and composer Noel Coward. A wealthy society beauty who attended the party later recalled Coward’s catering plans:

He wanted to introduce her to a new drink called a Bullshot, which was mostly beef bouillon, so he didn’t want to give her a soup starter. We were in a puzzle to know what nice thing we could give her, and I suggested lobster mousse. But nobody knew how to do lobster mousse up here, so I went down to Sunset Lodge in Montego Bay and got the French chef there to make one for her. He told me: “Put it in the deep freeze and the morning that Her Majesty is arriving, take it out and it will defrost.”

Well, unfortunately, no way would it defrost. We put it in the sun with a gardener standing over it because there were some cats and dogs round, but no way would it defrost. So Noel had to go to work and make her soup very quickly, which was slightly disgusting. Of course, she was told about what I’d done, so I was ragged about it very much.

BLESSING OF THE NETS

Norham, Northumberland, England

An old ceremony, no longer performed, was the official opening of the salmon fishing season and the blessing of the nets and boats by the vicar of the town. This took place on the beach just before midnight on this day. The vicar was traditionally rewarded with the first salmon caught.

WINE & THE LAW

1370: London, England

The vintners of the town asked the mayor and aldermen to ratify some new regulations on this day.

On Thursday the Feast of St. Valentine, . . . the good men of the trade of Vintners came before John Chychestre, Mayor, and the Aldermen, and delivered to them certain Articles, among them by common consent ordained, and requested the Mayor and Aldermen would order the same in nature to be observed inviolably, for the good governance of the said trade, and the common profit.

In summary, the orders were as follows:

1. A search was to be made “throughout all the City by good and lawful people of the trade” for corrupt wines.
2. That “no white wine of Gascoigne, of La Rochelle, of Spain, or any other country, shall be laid in taverns where Rhenish wine is for sale.”
3. That the cellar door in taverns, “where wines are laid down for sale, shall be kept open for one person of a company” to see the wine drawn.
4. “That upon the coming of the first fleet in time of Vintage, after the arrival of the first three or four ships from Gascoyne, inquisition shall be made, and the price fixed.”
5. That four men of the trade be appointed to search into such defaults.

CORN-STALK BEER

1775: USA

The *Virginia Gazette* published a recipe for green corn-stalk beer on this day.

The stalks, green as they were, as soon as pulled up, were carried to a

convenient trough, then chopped and pounded so much, that, by boiling, all the juice could be extracted out of them; which juice every planter almost knows is of saccharine a quality almost as anything can be, and that any thing of a luxuriant corn stalk is very full of it, . . . After this pounding, the stalks and all were put into a large copper, there lowered down its sweetness with water, to an equality with common observations in malt wort, and then boiled, till the liquor in a glass is seen to break, as the brewer's term it; after that it is strained, and boiled again with hops. The beer I drank had been made above twenty days, and bottle off about four days.

RESTAURANTS & HOTELS

1926: Los Angeles, USA



Brown Derby restaurant

(Associated Press)

The first Brown Derby restaurant opened on Wilshire Boulevard, opposite the Ambassador Hotel. It was the only one of the four Derby restaurants that was built in the shape of the iconic hat. The restaurant closed after fifty-seven years on April 3, 1985.

There are a number of theories as to the origin of the name, a popular one being that it was in response to something said by the famous actress Gloria Swanson, who had been married to Herbert Somborn, the entrepreneur who opened the

who had been married to Herbert Somborn, the entrepreneur who opened the restaurant. She was speaking about the way of life and the enthusiasm for the good life in the 1920s: “You could open a restaurant in an alley and call it anything. . . . It could even be called something as ridiculous as the Brown Derby.”

The signature dish at the Brown Derby from the mid-1930s on was cobb salad. It is said to have been invented there, but the exact details are disputed.

FOOD & EXPLORERS

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt’s journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia: “After sunrise the weather cleared up again. All hands were now employed in shooting crows; which, with some cockatoos, and a small scrub wallabi, gave us several good messes.”

1856: Africa

David Livingstone, on his great trans-African journey, wrote about an elephant hunt and feast:

When we had gone a few hours my men espied an elephant, and were soon in full pursuit. They were in want of meat, having tasted nothing but grain for several days. As soon as the animal fell my whole party were engaged in a wild dance round the body. Had we begun to cut it up before we got their [the traditional owners’] permission we should have lost the whole. They had brought a large party to eat their half, and divided it with us in a friendly way. My men were delighted with the feast, though by lying unopened a whole day the carcass was pretty far gone.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1661: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys, which is a rich source of information and gossip on the events surrounding the restoration of King Charles II to the throne: “The talk of the towne now is who is the King like to have for his Queene—and

...the king of the town how is, who is the king here to have for his Queen ... and whether Lent shall be kept with the strictnesse of the King's proclamacion; which it is thought cannot be, because of the poor, who cannot buy fish."

1796: USA

Francis Baily took a journey "in the unsettled parts of North America" in 1796–1797 and later wrote of his experiences. On this day in 1796, he was in Norfolk, Virginia.

Their breakfasts consist of beefsteaks, sausages, stewed veal, fried ham, eggs, coffee, and tea, and a dish, or rather a cake, peculiar to the southern states, made out of the meal of Indian corn, and called hoe-cake, of which the inhabitants are very fond. Its taste I do not dislike when buttered and eaten with eggs, although to many it is disagreeable: it is simply a mixture of Indian meal and water, and baked on an iron plate over a fire.

FOOD & WAR

1943: Thailand, World War II

Lieutenant Colonel Edward "Weary" Dunlop (1907–1993) was a surgeon in the Australian army. In 1942 he became a prisoner of war of the Japanese and at this date was in the Konyu prison camp in Thailand, which was still in the process of being built. Food was, at this stage, in good supply.

Eggs are coming up by barge in almost embarrassing quantities and a few other things are also available at times! Salt, pepper, sugar, coffee, tea, occasionally small calves, peanut toffee, limes. Pig fat, coconut oil. A little Black Market also opening up; viz.; tonight bought a little fish and had this with some awfully good rissoles (rice). Very few of the lads catch many fish and these very small.

FEBRUARY 15

TIFFIN

1907: Kobe, Japan

The Oriental Hotel offered tiffin to its guests. Here is the menu for this day:

TIFFIN

1. Anchovy Toast.

SOUP

2. Pot a Feu.

FISH

3. Grilled Fish, Marinade Sauce.

HOT DISHES

4. Sauté of Mutton and Rice.
 5. Roast Loin of Pork, Apple Sauce.
 6. Minced Chicken Cutlets à la Vert Pré.
 7. Grilled Beefsteak and Marrow Sauce (to order).
 8. Fish Curry with Rice.
 9. Boiled Potatoes.
 10. Sauté of Sweet Potato.
 11. Carrots Parisienne.
 12. Vegetable Marrow au Gratin.
- #### COLD DISHES
13. Roast Pigeon. 14. Ham.
 15. Chicken. 16. Roast Beef.
 17. Corned Beef. 18. Lettuce Salad.

19. Beetroot. 20. Onions.

PASTRY

21. Jam Roly Poly. 22. Eclairs.

23. Buckwheat Cakes.

FRUITS IN SEASON

CHEESE

American, Cream, and Cheddar.

Children's Meals are served half an hour earlier than Adults'.

Children occupying seats in the Dining Room during Meal Hours will be charged full price.

Tiffin is an Anglo-Indian concept that first appeared at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The word comes from a northern England dialect word meaning "to take a little drink," but the concept clearly evolved a long way from its origins. It is an informal meal, often taken buffet-style, and classically it has consisted of curry dishes and their traditional accompaniments. In its later form, when it was taken up by other countries in the East, it often included other "English" dishes, and the menu items were numbered, as in the above example, to minimize misunderstandings due to language differences.

The essayist Thomas de Quincey (1785–1859) said of tiffin, "The English corresponding term is luncheon: but how meagre a shadow is the European meal to its glowing Asiatic cousin."

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1493: The New World

Christopher Columbus, at the end of his voyage to the New World, wrote a letter back to stakeholders in Spain: "In those islands, where there are lofty mountains, the cold was very keen there this winter; but they endure it by being accustomed

thereto, and by the help of the meats which they eat with many and inordinately hot spices.”

1812: USA

From the journal of Wilson Price Hunt’s overland expedition in 1811–1812:

On the 15th we passed several large islands. The terrain on the north bank was covered with oak and ash trees but all were inundated. I stopped by some Indian huts where I found four of our Fort Astoria men who were trading sturgeon and fishing for some excellent little fish that are about six inches long. The Indians call them othlecan [candlefish] and catch many of them in the spring. We made camp on two low islands near the south bank.



Candlefish

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

From Coxen's Range I returned to the river, . . . Brown descried a kangaroo sitting in the shade of a large Bastard-box tree; it seemed to be so oppressed by the heat of the noonday sun as to take little notice of us, so that Brown was enabled to approach sufficiently near to shoot it. It proved to be a fine doe, with a young one; we cooked the latter for our dinner, and I sent Brown to the camp with the dam, where my companions most joyfully received him; for all our dried meat was by this time consumed, and all they had for supper and breakfast, were a straw-coloured ibis, a duck, and a crow.

FEBRUARY 16

STATE BANQUET

1954: Australia

A state banquet was held at Parliament House for Queen Elizabeth and Prince Phillip during their first visit to Australia. The menu was:

Paw-Paw Cocktail

Grilled Murray River Cod with Butter Sauce

Roast Breast of Chicken with Asparagus Tips

Ice Pudding "Royal Style"

FOOD & WAR

1778: American Revolutionary War

George Washington wrote to George Clinton (later Thomas Jefferson's vice president) from Valley Forge:

[There is at present a] dreadful situation of the army for want of provisions, and the miserable prospects before us . . . is more alarming than you will probably conceive . . . For some days past, there has been little less, than a famine in camp. A part of the army has been a week, without any kind of flesh, and the rest three or four days. Naked and starving as they are . . . they have not been ere this excited by their sufferings, to a general mutiny and dispersion . . . but, if you can devise any means to procure a quantity of cattle, or another kind of flesh, for the use of this army to be at camp in the course of a month, you will render a most essential service to the common cause.

1915: Britain, World War I

First Lord of the Admiralty Winston Churchill announced the forthcoming blockade of Germany:

We have not yet stopped the importation of food into Germany, but the time has come to consider the situation. The Allied Governments will probably make declaration of action, the effect of which will be to bring the full pressure of the English naval power to bear on Germany. The pressure of the navy itself could decide the issue of this war.

1917: Britain, World War I

The Food Controller has also issued another order entitled the Dealings in Sugar (Restriction) Order, 1917, dated February, 1917. This Order provides that no person shall on or after 16th February, 1917, without a permit issued under the authority of the Royal Commission on Sugar Supply, either on his own behalf or on behalf of any other person (a) buy, sell, or deal in; or (b) enter into negotiations for the sale or purchase of or other dealing in any sugar outside the United Kingdom, whether or not the sale, purchase, or dealing is to be effected in the United Kingdom.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1660: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

So to my office . . . and to take up a box of China oranges and two little barrels of Scallops at my house, which Capt. Custance sent to me for my Lord. . . . I met with Osborne and with Shaw and Spicer, and there we went to the Sun tavern in expectation of a dinner, where we had sent us only two trencherfuls of meat, at which we were very merry, while in came Mr. Wade and his friend Capt. Moyse, and here we stayed till 7 at night, I winning a Quart of sack of Shaw that one trencherful that was sent us was all lamb, and he that it was veale.

China oranges: these were sweet oranges, and quite distinct from the bitter Seville oranges used to make marmalade and sauces.

Sack: a fortified wine, essentially the same as sherry.

Trenchers: these are plates; in medieval times they were thick slabs of dense bread. By Pepys's time, the common sort was made from wood.

The following seventeenth-century recipe is for a “conversation piece” dish—an elegant decorative idea intended to hark back to previous times and impress the guests.

To make white Trencher-Plates which may be eaten

Take two eggs beaten very well, Yolks and Whites, two spoonfuls of Sack, one spoonful of Rosewater, and so much flower as will make it into a stiff Paste, then roule it thin, and then lay it upon the insides of Plates well buttered, cut them to fit the Plates, and bake them upon them, then take them forth, and when they are cold, take a pound of double refin'd Sugar beaten and searced, with a little Ambergreece, the White of an Egg and Rosewater, beat these well together, and Ice your Plates all over with it, and set them into the Oven again till they be dry.

—*The Queen-like Closet, or, Rich Cabinet: Stored with All Manner of Rare Receipts for Preserving, Candyng, and Cookery. Very Pleasant and Beneficial to All Ingenious Persons of the Female Sex* (1672), by Hannah Wooley

FEBRUARY 17

THE FEAST OF THE PHEASANT

1454: France

Philip the Good (1396–1467), duke of Burgundy and founder of the chivalric Order of the Golden Fleece in 1430, held a great feast on February 17, 1454, that was spectacular even by Burgundian standards of lavishness. The event became known as the Feast of the Pheasant on account of Philip's oath to launch a crusade against the Ottoman Empire in retaliation for their invasion of Constantinople on May 29, 1453. Philip made this vow over the body of a live pheasant, in keeping with the medieval tradition of "bird oaths," by which an oath taken over the body of one of the "noble birds," such as the pheasant or peacock, was binding unto death.

There were three tables set up: one for the Duke and his suite, one for the young Count of Charolais and his retinue, and one for the knights and their ladies. Chroniclers of the time report that there were forty-eight dishes served, but most of the interest focussed on the *entremets*—the part-food, part-entertainment, part-propaganda subtleties in the form of marvellous constructions and dioramas involving actors, musicians, and live animals. There were many of these on the tables and around the dining hall, and their description beggars belief. In one corner, a live lion was chained to a pillar, protecting a statue of a nude woman dispensing *hypocras* from her right breast, with the wording above the lion saying "Ne touchez a ma dame" (Do not touch my Lady). Another was a trick barrel that served sweet or sour wine, and yet another was a castle whose moat was filled with an orange drink from the towers.

One of the most interesting of these *entremets* was a giant pie, which, when the top was cut open, revealed twenty-eight musicians who immediately began playing. It is more than likely that this is the origin of the nursery rhyme song about "four and twenty blackbirds baked in a pie."

CHINESE NEW YEAR

1902: New York, USA

Two large banquets featuring "Chinese viands" were given on this night in New York. It was Chinese New Year. The Chinese Merchant Association hosted one of the events; the other was held by the Oriental Association. The Oriental

of the events; the other was held by the Oriental Association. The Oriental Association dinner started later than the Merchant Association dinner, and apparently some of the guests of the former (prominent gentlemen of the city) went on to join the latter (to which some women had been invited).

The Oriental Club officers announced after the dinner that the following menu consists of the most elaborate Chinese menu ever prepared and served to other than Orientals in this city.

- Imported Fruits and nuts
- Pineapple, Ly-Chee, Golden Lime, Crambola,
- Pomegranate, Almonds
- Fried Shark's Fin Bird's Nest Soup
- Broiled Squab, Broiled Chicken, Bundled Duck,
- Golden Cash Chicken, Mushroom Egg Soup,
- Mushroom Chicken, Mushroom Choy Soy,
- Lotus Seed Soup, Fancy Pastry, Mum Kee Tea,
- Snow, Pear Wine

A HUNTING LUNCH

1862: France

A gala entertainment was planned to celebrate the completion of the Baron James de Rothschild's magnificent Chateau Ferrières. Napoleon III and his entourage travelled by train to the estate and were received with great pomp and ceremony. After lunch (eaten from the famous Sèvres china) there was a hunting excursion in the forests of the estate, and an astounding 1,231 head of game were killed. Later in the evening, some of this game was cooked and served at a lavish buffet. The music was equally splendid: Gioachino Rossini himself composed a hunting song and conducted the choir of the Paris Opera for its performance of the piece.

A PUBLIC FAST

1757: London, England

The *London Gazette* advised about a public day of fasting ordered by royal proclamation to take place on this day:

[A] Proclamation ordering that a Publick Fast and Humiliation be observed throughout that Part of Great Britain call'd England, the Dominion of Wales, and Town of Berwick upon Tweed, upon Friday the Seventeenth Day of February next, in order to obtain Pardon of our Sins, and in the most devout and solemn Manner send up our Prayers and Supplications to the Divine Majesty for averting those heavy Judgments which our manifold Sins and Provocations have most justly deserved, and imploring his Blessing and Assistance on our Arms, and for restoring and perpetuating Peace, Safety, and Prosperity to his Majesty and his Kingdoms. Proclamations are likewise issued for observing a Fast in Ireland on the said 17th of February, and in Scotland on Thursday the 16th of February.

FOOD SAFETY

2008: USA

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced that 143 million pounds of beef prepared by the Canadian Westland Hallmark Meat Packing Company was to be recalled. The quantity consisted of the entire production of the company for the previous two years and represented the largest meat recall in U.S. history.

It was alleged that the company had committed “egregious violations” of federal animal care regulations by failing to provide veterinary checks of animals destined for slaughter, thus allowing sick animals to be prepared as food. In actual fact, most of the meat produced during this time had probably already been consumed, some of it via school and other public nutrition programs. No human illness had been attributed to the recalled beef.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1763: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde:

I dined at the Chaplain's table with Pickering and Waring, upon a roasted Tongue and Udder.

N.B. I shall not dine on a roasted Tongue and Udder again soon.

To roast a Cows Udder

Take a Cows Udder, and first boyl it well: then stick it thick all over with Cloves: then when it is cold spit it, and lay it on the fire, and apply it very well with basting of sweet Butter, and when it is sufficiently roasted and brown, then dredge it, and draw it from the fire, take Venegar and Butter, and put it on a chafing dish and coals; and boyl it with white bread crum, till it be thick: then put to it good store of Sugar and of Cinnamon, and putting it into a clean dish, lay the Cows Udder therein, and trim the sides of the dish with Sugar, and so serve it up.

—*The English Housewife* (1683), Gervase Markham

FEBRUARY 18

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

1531: London, England

In the time of Henry VIII, a cook called Richard Roose was publicly boiled to death at Smithfield market for his attempt to poison his master, John French, the bishop of Rochester—an act that was determined to be treasonable. It was alleged that he poisoned the porridge (or pottage) and as a result seventeen persons in the household, plus a number of the poor who had been given the leftovers, became ill, with two of them dying. The bishop remained unscathed but ironically was executed by order of Henry VIII a few years later, in 1535. It may be that Roose was the scapegoat for a conspiracy to murder the bishop, who was a staunch Catholic, and Catherine of Aragon's chief supporter during Henry's attempt to divorce her.

An official document of the time recorded the decision.

[N]ow in the tyme of this presente parliament, that is to saye, in the xviiijth daye of Februarye in the xxij. yere of his moste victorious reign, one Richard Roose late of Rouchester in the countie of Kent, coke [cook], . . . of his moste wyked and dampnable dysposicyon dyd caste a certyne venym or poyson into a vessell replenysshed with yeste or barme stondyng in the kechyn of the Reverende Father in God John Bysshopp of Rochester at his place in Lamebyth Marsshe, wyth whych yeste or barme and other thynges convenyent porrage or gruell was forthwyth made for his famylye there beyng, wherby nat only the nombre of xvij. [seventeen] persons of his said famylie whych dyd eate of that porrage were mortally enfected and poisoned . . . but also certeyne pore people which resorted to the sayde Bysshops place and were there charytably fedde wyth the remayne of the saide porrage and other vytayles, were in lyke wyse infected . . . our sayde Sovereign Lorde the Kyng . . . hath ordeyned and enacted by auctorytie of thys presente parlyament that the sayde poysonyng be adjudged and demed as high treason. . . . It is ordeyned and enacted by auctoritie of this present parlyament that the said Richard Roose shalbe therfore boyled to deathe.

DROWNING IN WINE

1478: England

George Duke of Clarence (b. 1449) was executed for treason by order of his brother Edward IV (or some say by his other brother, the future Richard III). Rumor soon had it that he had been drowned in a butt of Malmsey (a sweet white wine), a rumor that became received wisdom when it was reinforced by William Shakespeare in his play *Richard III*: “Finalie the duke was cast into the Tower, and therewith adjudged for a traitor, and privile drowned in a butt of malmesie.”

FOOD & WAR

1915: USA, World War I

The *New York Evening Post* editorial made comment on the *Wilhelmina* debate (see **January 26**):

The historic British position has been that foodstuffs not destined for use of the army must be allowed to pass. That, in general, has been the practice of the English cruisers and courts during the early months of this war. But now that Germany has abolished all private buying and selling of foodstuffs within the empire, the old distinctions are obliterated. The presumption today is that all foodstuffs entering Germany are for military use, or may be immediately requisitioned for military use.

1946: Britain, World War II

It was reported that squirrel pie was being recommended to the British public as a postwar austerity measure and environmental act:

The Food Ministry, in its efforts to relieve the food shortage, has officially put squirrel pie back on the market. The Ministry recommends squirrel pie for a double reason—it is a delicacy, and grey squirrels are a pest because they eat vast quantities of food, and so far little progress has been made to reduce their numbers. The chairman of the United States Senate Foreign Relations Committee (Senator Connally) told a Press conference in Berlin yesterday that he had seen no sign of starvation in Germany. He added that during his five weeks in London at the U.N.O. Conference he had had only one egg and two rashers of bacon.

EXOTIC FOODS

1996: Gabon, Central Africa

The first news of an outbreak of the deadly Ebola virus—attributed to eating chimpanzee meat—appeared in the newspapers. The outbreak occurred in Mayibout, a remote village of 150 inhabitants in northeast Gabon. On January 26, a group of men hunting for food found the body of a chimpanzee which they took back to the village. Nineteen people who were involved in butchering and eating the carcass became ill, ten of whom died soon afterward. The disease is transmitted readily via contact with an infected person, and ultimately thirty-seven people contracted the disease, of whom twenty-one died.

Chimpanzees had been known for several years to be carriers of Ebola virus, but any found meat must be attractive to remote subsistence cultures living off the land. In wealthier communities in Central Africa, monkey meats and other

land. In western communities in Central Africa, monkey meats and other “bushmeats” are considered a delicacy and can attract a premium price, driving hunting and poaching and imperilling some species.

FOOD FIRSTS

1998: USA

The Mann Packing Company registered the trademark “Broccolini,” stating that it was first used in commerce on February 18, 1998. The variety was first developed in 1993 by the Sakata Seed Company in Japan.

Broccolini is not young broccoli but a hybrid of two species of *Brassica oleracea*—broccoli (*Brassica oleracea* var. *botrytis*) and the Chinese favorite, *gai-lan* (*Brassica oleracea* var. *alboglabra*).

ANNIVERSARIES

1626: Italy

Francesco Redi was born in Arezzo. He was physician to Grand Duke Cosimo III of Tuscany and a chocolatière of some renown. Chocolate was an expensive, exotic beverage at the time (solid eating chocolate was still several centuries away) and was considered to have medicinal qualities. Redi flavored his chocolate with equally expensive and exotic ingredients such as ambergris, musk, and—most famously—vanilla.

1900: Paris, France

Fernand Petiot was born. Petiot moved to the United States in 1925 and became a bartender. He claims to have invented and named the classic Bloody Mary cocktail.

I cover the bottom of the shaker with four large dashes of salt, two dashes of black pepper, two dashes of cayenne pepper, and a layer of Worcestershire sauce; I then add a dash of lemon juice and some cracked ice, put in two ounces of vodka and two ounces of thick tomato juice, shake, strain, and pour.

FEBRUARY 19

A SECOND EMPIRE DINNER

1857: Paris, France

Moïse Polydore Millaud, a banker and owner of the newspaper *La Presse*, gave a great dinner at his home in rue Saint-Georges, Paris. The famous literary brothers Jules and Edmond Goncourt were present. The menu was typical for the time of the Second French Empire (1852–1870) under Napoleon III.

DEUX POTAGES.

Le Potage Reine.

Le Potage Royal.

POISSONS.

Les Saumons Mayonnaise.

Le Turbot à la Portugaise.

RELEVÉS.

Les Daubes à la Gelée.

Les Pâtés de Foies gras truffés.

Le Bœuf de Hambourg à la Tyrolienne.

Les Dindes truffées à la Périgourdine.

ENTRÉES

Les Bartavelles au fumet de gibier.

Les Suprêmes de volaille à la Coligny.

Les Caisses de Foies gras truffés.

Les Bécassines à la Conti.

Les Filets de Bœuf à la Provençale.

Le Chaudfroid d'Alouettes.

La Mayonnaise de Filets de Soles.

ROTS

Les Faisans rôtis sur Croustade.

Les Bécasses rôties des Ardennes.

ENTREMETS

Les Asperges en Branches.

Les Pois à la Française.

Les Cèpes à la Bordelaise.

Les Salades à la Vénitienne.

Les Raviers assortis.

Les Chartreuses d'Orange.

La Gelée à la Pompadour.

Les Gâteaux montés.

Les Sorbets au Kirsch.

DESSERT

Les Bombes glacées.

Les Corbeilles de Fruits couronnées de raisin.

Les Fours, Biscuits-vanille.

Les Gaufrettes.

Les Fromages glacés.

Les Fruits glacés.

Les Bonbons fins.

Le Fromage sec.

Le Caramel.

CAFÉ.—VINS FINS.—LIQUEURS.

POTEL ET CHABOT

FOOD BUSINESS

1906: USA

The Battle Creek Toasted Corn Flake Co. was incorporated in Michigan by Will Keith (W. K.) Kellogg and Charles D. Bolin. The rights to produce Kellogg's Corn Flakes had been purchased from Dr. John Harvey Kellogg.

John Kellogg described how his invention came about:

I prescribed zwieback for an old lady, and she broke her false teeth on it. She demanded that I pay ten dollars for her . . . teeth. I began to think that we ought to have a ready-cooked food which would not break people's teeth. One night about three o'clock I was awakened by a phone call from a patient, and as I went back to bed I remembered that I had been having a most important dream. Before I went to sleep again I gathered up the threads of my dream, and found I had been dreaming of a way to make flaked foods. The next morning I boiled some wheat, and while it was soft, I ran it through a machine Mrs. Kellogg had for rolling dough out thin. This made the wheat into thin films, and I scraped it off with a cake knife, and baked it in the oven.

That was the first of the modern breakfast foods. Later, I invented nearly 60

other foods to meet purely dietetic needs.

Kellogg believed that cereals were essential in treating what he saw as the two major problems that explained almost all human misery. They were “the solitary vice” (masturbation) and constipation, which he believed caused “auto-intoxication.”

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1793: Britain

An early patent for a food preservation method was granted to John Donaldson. His method was based on “proportioning the farinaceous vegetable principle with the coagulative or mucilaginous one.” The vegetable matter could be cooked or raw. The exact proportions of vegetable, flour or meal, and/or “mucilage” depended on the water content of the vegetable. Carrots or turnips, for example, required a preserving matter compounded of barley or wheat meal with a solution of common gum or vegetable mucilage. The prepared vegetable matter was then kiln dried and packed in boxes.

FOOD FOR THE POOR

1924: England

At the workhouse at Weymouth, the guardians’ minutes for the meeting held on this day included the following note:

The suggestion of an evening meal being provided, it was resolved that in lieu of an extra meal, the last meal served (supper) at 5.30–6.30 p.m. be augmented by the inclusion of 4oz cake per inmate on Tuesday and Friday as well as on Sunday, varied by 1oz jam on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1660: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys: “(Lord’s day). Early in the morning I set my

books that I brought home yesterday up in order in my study. Thence forth to Mr. Harper's to drink a draft of purle."

Purl[e] is hot beer, often with gin or another spirit added, and flavored with various spices. It is often said to have been a morning draught.

The following extract from *The Curiosities of Ale & Beer* (1889), by John Bickerdyke, describes one variation of the beverage.

According to one receipt, common Purl contained the following ingredients:—Roman wormwood, gentian root, *calamus aromaticus* snake root, horse radish, dried orange peel, juniper berries, seeds or kernels of Seville oranges, all placed in beer, and allowed to stand for some months. The writer who gives this receipt says a pound or two of galingale improves it—as if anything could improve such a perfect combination.

BREAD RIOTS

1855: Liverpool, England

Hunger was rife in mid-nineteenth-century England. The *Liverpool Albion* of February 19 reported on the desperate acts of starving workers.

This morning a large mob, composed of the dregs of the population, and swelled by women and girls, paraded Shaw's brow, Scotland-road, Vauxhall, and Dale-streets, entering all the bread-shops, with the exception of Mr. Lester's, opposite St. Anthony's Chapel Scotland-road, and demanding bread, helping themselves freely to the loaves if repulsed. . . . The riotous demonstrations have caused the greatest consternation in the town. . . . The splendid constabulary force of the county is also held prepared to co-operate with the town force, if necessary. . . . Should, however, the civil force be unequal to the task, about which, however, no fears are entertained, the artillery militia, which are held in readiness at the barracks, will be called out.

Major Greig went to different streets in which the people were forming themselves into crowds, and addressed them upon the folly of their attempting to gain by force what the merchants and other inhabitants of the town were willing to afford them of their own tree will He said that if they

would be quiet, every suffering person would be relieved. He felt sure that no one would suffer the pangs of hunger long. He was frequently interrupted with cries of “They should have done it before.” “We’re clamming.” “Lots of us have died of hunger.”

A man dropped down in Crooked-lane, South Castle street, about half-past one o’clock. It was said that he had died from starvation. He was carried to the Northern Hospital by policemen, an immense crowd following them.

In connection with this unfortunate matter we may mention that the distribution of tickets for food and coal, out of the Exchange Relief Fund, is still being diverted from its proper source. The dock labourers, for whom the relief was intended, are not the recipients, the disorderly mobs from the lush districts, by their vehement clamour, obtaining by far the greatest number of tickets distributed at the old Police-office. They are given away in the most indiscriminate manner, and the consequence is that the greatest brawlers are the most fortunate, the strongest and boldest obtaining the greater portion of the spoil. The respectable but distressed dock labourers may be seen with their hands in their pockets looking at the scene of confusion, but preferring the pangs of hunger to a brawling contention for the bread tickets One man when spoken to on the subject, said he would rather die on the flags than take his chance with the depraved and desperate crowd.

FEBRUARY 20

DINING CAR SERVICE

1910: USA

Fred Harvey’s Dining Car Service on the Santa Fe Railroad offered the following choices for breakfast on this day:

Sliced Oranges Bananas and Cream

Oatmeal Boiled Rice

Toasted Mapl-Flake

Boiled Salt Mackerel

Fried Oysters, Tomato Sauce

Pork Tenderloin, Piquante Sauce

Veal Kidney, en Brochette

Broiled Ham or Bacon

Jelly Omelette

French Fried Potatoes Hashed Browned Potatoes

Wheat Cakes, Maple Syrup

Rolls Toast Muffins

Coffee Tea Cocoa

FOOD FIRSTS

1673: London, England

The first recorded wine auction was held on this day in the upper rooms of Garraway's coffee house. The coffee houses of seventeenth-century London became hubs for business as well as gossip, and Garraway's (or Garway's) quickly became a center for major transactions, such as auctions of everything, including ships and land.

Goods (including entire shipping vessels) were sold "by the candle," that is, a one-inch piece of candle was set to burn, and bidding could continue until the candle went out, at which time the last bidder became the purchaser. Another variation was that a pin was placed part way down the candle, and when the pin fell out, the bidding ceased.

A BEER BOYCOTT

1922: London, England

Dockland and transport workers boycotted beer in protest at brewers reducing wages and still keeping up the price of beer. The cable press report read:

A beer boycott has begun in dockland in London. A million transporters have gone dry and entered a solemn league covenant not to drink until the price is reduced. Every bar was desolate today, except for a few martyrs eating sandwiches to the accompaniment of tea, coffee, or cocoa.

Mr Bevin, the dockers' secretary, is trying to make the boycott effective throughout the country, but thus far there has been little success in the provinces. Instead, the working men's clubs are petitioning the Chancellor of the Exchequer to reduce the beer tax, which is the real cause of the high prices.

WEDDING CAKE

1998: USA

Benjamin and Amanda Yim from San Francisco paid US\$29,000 for a piece of the wedding cake from the marriage of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor on June 3, 1937. The Duke of Windsor (1894–1972) was the former King Edward VIII who abdicated the throne in order to marry the twice-divorced American socialite Wallis Simpson.

Mr. Yim said that the cake would not be eaten, but “It is almost unimaginable to have such an item exist. It is something totally surreal. It represents the epitome of a great romance.”

MILKSHAKE

1937: Britain

The first written mention of a milkshake in Britain occurred in the *Daily Herald*, as a caption under the photograph of a woman “sampling a milkshake after she had opened a milk bar in Tottenham Court Road.”

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1765: Rome

From the journal of Tobias Smollett's *Travels through France and Italy*:

The provisions at Rome are reasonable and good, the vitella mongana, however, which is the most delicate veal I ever tasted, is very dear, being sold for two pauls, or a shilling, the pound. Here are the rich wines of Montepulciano, Montefiascone, and Monte di Dragone; but what we commonly drink at meals is that of Orvieto, a small white wine, of an agreeable flavour.

1640: England

Lady Brilliana Harley wrote regularly to her son Edward while he was away at Oxford. She frequently sent parcels of food to him and often included something for his tutor: "I have sent you a gammon of backen [bacon] by this carrier, and a Lenten token of dried sweetmeats for your tutor. . . . If I had bine well, I had sent you a larger provision for Lent. . . . The fried appells are for you."

Sadly, Lady Harley did not give any details about the sweetmeats that she sent to her son's tutor. Sweetmeats were made from fruits and flowers, and were wet—in a syrup—or dry, much like our modern glacé or crystallized fruit, or fruit leather. Although well-to-do women did not perform the dirty, menial tasks of day-to-day cooking, the preparation of medicines and sweetmeats at this time was considered the responsibility of the lady of the household. A large and important household would have had a still room where these occupations were carried out. It is possible that Lady Harley herself made the sweetmeats she sent to her son, and the recipe she used may well have been similar to the following one, taken from a cookbook published during her lifetime.

To dry Apricocks.

Take them when they be ripe, stone them, and pare off their rindes very thin, then take halfe as much Sugar as they weigh, finely beaten, and lay them with that Sugar into a silver or earthen dish, laying first a lay of Sugar, and then of Fruit, and let them stand so all night, and in the morning the Sugar will be all melted, then put them into a Skillet, and boyle them apace, scumming them well, and as soon as they grow tender take them off from the fire, and let them stand two dayes in the Syrupe, then take them out, and

lay them on a fine plate, and so dry them in a Stove.

—*A Book of Fruits and Flowers* (1653)

FEBRUARY 21

PRESIDENTIAL DINNER

1977: USA

President Jimmy Carter entertained Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau of Canada at dinner on this day.

MENU

Alaskan King Crab in Herb Sauce

Saint Michelle Chenin Blanc

Roast Stuffed Saddle of Lamb

Timbale of Spinach

Glazed Carrots

Louis Martini Cabernet Sauvignon

Watercress and Mushroom Salad

Wisconsin Blue Cheese

Beaulieu Extra Dry

Orange Sherbet Ambrosia

Cookies

Demitasse

Guests were entertained by students from the Columbia School of Theatrical

Arts in a thirty-minute song-and-dance presentation summarizing American history from colonial times to the present. A harpist from the Marine Corps played in the reception room as guests were arriving, and dinner music was provided by the U.S. Marine Band, with selections from American Broadway musicals and movies.

PANCAKE RACES

1950: USA

The first International Pancake Race was held in Liberal, Kansas, against the women of Olney in Buckinghamshire, England. It has since become an annual event.

Shrove Tuesday, or Mardi Gras or Pancake Day, is the last day before the forty days of Lent, when practicing Christians are expected to forgo luxuries such as rich food—hence “shrove.” It is the day to use up any butter and eggs remaining in the pantry, and for many centuries one of the popular ways to do this was to make pancakes.

A pancake race has been held in Olney since 1445. The story of origin is that centuries ago, a woman was so absorbed making her pancakes that she forgot the time, and when she heard the church bells she ran out of the house with her pan and its pancake in her hand. Today, contestants must run a 415-yard course, tossing their pancake as they go.



Pancake Races

(AP Photo/Matt Dunham)

A CHINESE MEAL

1927: England

The Nottingham Rotarians were addressed by Mr. A. Peters, the past president of the Sheffield Club, on this day. At that time, very few English people had experience with Chinese food, and those present may not have been inspired to try it after Mr. Peters outlined the menu of a Chinese banquet he had attended. He said they had “thousand year old eggs, mussels in custard, slugs and seaweed, sharks’ fins, ducks’ giblets, and bamboo shoots.” Regarding the eggs, Mr. Peters added that they might have been only 100, 50, or 10 years old, but that was their title and they were black. He also said that eating bamboo shoots was like chewing a walking stick.

The Chinese have been making “thousand year old eggs” or “century eggs” for a very long time. The eggs are covered in a highly alkaline mixture of clay, ash, and quicklime and then rolled in rice hulls. They are left for weeks to months

(*not* hundreds of years) during which time the yolk becomes greenish in colour and creamy in consistency and the white becomes brown and jelly-like, and the whole has a pungent odour of sulphur and ammonia.

ABOARD SHIP

1947: Britain

The RMS *Queen Elizabeth* was built in 1938 and named for Elizabeth, the queen consort, who became the queen mother on the accession of her daughter in 1952. The ship, like so many of her contemporaries, became converted to a troop ship during World War II and returned to carrying passengers when the war ended. The dinner menu offered a modest selection of choices on this day, in keeping with the postwar rationing which was still in force in Britain, and hence her ships.

DINNER

Hor's d'Œuvres Variés

Consommé Villageoise Potage Potiron

Suprême of Halibut—Sauce Ecosaise

Médailon of Veal with Spaghetti Tomato Sauce

Long Island Ducking—Apple Sauce

Cauliflower String Beans

Boiled and Roast Potatoes

Plum Pudding

Ice Cream

Fresh Fruit

Coffee

MILITARY FOOD

1852: USA

The *Scientific American* of this date described the condition of quantities of preserved meat intended for the Royal Navy and suggested that the navy consider the “meat biscuit” patented by American Gail Borden in 1850 (*see February 5*):

At Portsmouth, Eng., a great deal of naval stores of preserved meats have been condemned. They were found to be totally unfit for use, putrified and abominable. Thousands of canisters had to be thrown into the sea. This was beautiful work for inspectors of meat in the British Navy. The British Admiralty would do well to purchase the patent of Mr. Gail Borden, for making meat biscuit. This would be a great blessing to the British navy. They never would be troubled with bad preserved meats. It seems that the meats spoken of were purchased abroad, and the British Naval Commissary has been cheated most shamefully. The British Government should remember that the meat biscuit took a Council Medal at the Great Exhibition, We hope that the British Admiralty will pay attention to this.

The contractor for the Admiralty was a Jew named Goldner, who had the contract for supplying the Admiralty for six years. There were 8,660 cannisters: they cost about a million of dollars. What wretched officers there must have been at Gosport. This Goldner, it seems, lives in Hanover. If Napoleon or Wellington had to do with such a fellow, they would soon make him face the triangles.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1989: USA

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved Simplese as a fat substitute. Simplese is a “microparticulated” protein made from egg and whey and is useful in low-calorie foods. It functions as a fat substitute in the diet because the tiny molecules provide a similar “mouth-feel” to fat—mouth-feel being one of the factors that makes fatty food desirable to humans. It is marketed as a natural substitute because it is made from egg and dairy protein.

The product was an accidental discovery in 1979 and as a “Protein Product Base” was granted U.S. Patent No. 4734287 on March 29, 1988.

FEBRUARY 22

NATIONAL HOTEL DISEASE

1857: USA

President James Buchanan was almost unable to attend his own inauguration ceremony on March 4, 1857. He and a number of others had been suffering from a serious form of dysentery since eating at the National Hotel in Washington—then the largest hotel in the city—on the night of January 25, 1857. Cases of illness had been reported since early in the month and continued to occur over the following weeks, with another big spike in numbers after the inauguration. Many of the sufferers remained ill for months, some for years, but the exact nature of the illness was never elucidated. The final toll in what became named the National Hotel Disease was about four hundred affected, of whom almost forty died, including three congressmen.

On February 23, the presidential physician, navy surgeon Jonathan Folz, wrote to his patient, expressing pleasure at his improvement and suggesting

if there is any mineral poison in your system, the best means to eradicate it is, to supply the system freely with protine [*sic*—i.e.—eat beef, mutton & all nutritious animal foods, avoiding vegetables and acids. . . . If you have not engaged rooms elsewhere, you should do so by all means. The water near the President(s) House all comes from the same spring and is the best in the city.

Naturally, conspiracy theories emerged almost immediately. It was alleged that the abolitionist arm of the Republican Party had poisoned the president and other prominent members of the Democratic Party, with the most popular choice of poison being arsenic. Another popular theory was that the illness was due to the powerful stench or “miasma” emanating from a nearby sewer. It seems likely that the severe form of food poisoning was due to a plumbing problem, the recent severe winter causing cracking of pipes and contamination of the hotel water with sewage.

FOOD & WAR

1944: Britain, World War II

Lemons, which had been very scarce for a long time, appeared unexpectedly in London shops on this day (the Monday before Shrove Tuesday), in time for flavoring the Shrove Tuesday pancakes. Long queues formed outside the shops to buy the lemons at 6 ½ pence per pound. The shops sold out by 4 pm, but the public were advised that the remainder of a shipment of 15 million lemons would be available over the next few days.

1944: Britain, World War II

The Ministry of Food's *Food Facts* leaflet Number 190, published on this day, gave recipes for using dried egg—the much disliked wartime substitute for the frequently scarce fresh eggs. The leaflet included a recipe for batter which could be used to make both Yorkshire pudding and pancakes.

Yorkshire Pudding

Mix 1 dried egg (dry), 4 oz. flour, salt, ½ pint mixed milk and water. Add sufficient of the liquid to make a stiff batter, beat well, add rest of liquid and beat again. Make a knob of fat smoking-hot in a tin, pour in batter. Cook in brisk oven about 30 minutes.

Pancakes

Here's a family favourite you can make as often as you like! Use the Yorkshire pudding recipe. This makes 6 pancakes. Fry in "smoking" hot fat, browning the pancakes on both sides. Serve with a spot of jam on each. They are delicious—just like pre-war!

FOOD & LAW

2001: USA

The USDA determined a new standard for the size of the holes in Swiss cheese on this

day. The regulations required fourteen pages. In summary it was proposed that the “eyes” in grade A and B Swiss cheese should be between 3/8 and 11/16 of an inch.

The changes were the result of lobbying on the part of cheese makers, who argued that cheese with larger holes was not so efficiently sliced by the large-scale commercial slicing machines, and “If the holes are bigger there is more trim, more waste and less profit.” Cheese with smaller holes also matures more quickly—another advantage for producers.

Not surprisingly, there was criticism from some quarters that such legislative activity was a waste of taxpayers’ money.

2011: Britain

Cornish pasties received the PDO designation from the European Union.

There is no consistency in old cookery books about the exact nature of a pie and a pasty or the correct filling, but the common characteristics nowadays are that in general, a pasty is a “turnover” cooked on a flat tray of a size designed for eating in the hand. The latter feature was not the case in Pepys’s time, when *pasty* signified a very large piece of meat—a whole haunch of venison or a whole gammon, for example—wrapped in pastry in a free-form way, and baked for many hours.

The pasty was not invented in Cornwall, of course. Wherever there is pastry, there is some form of pasty, but the folk of Cornwall claim a particular style as their own, and it has entered their folklore in a number of stories. One story says that the devil never crossed the Tamar River into Cornwall for fear of ending up in a pasty (the implication here being that is that the contents of a pasty may be rather nasty). The thick, twisted edge of a “genuine” Cornish pasty was also said to function as a handle for the dirty hands of the miners, who then threw it down the mineshaft before they resumed work after their lunch.

The correct filling for a Cornish pasty is disputed by pasty purists, but most agree that the meat used should be fresh and raw, not leftover from a cooked joint. Vegetables are included, but the proportion in relation to the meat is debated. Onions seem to be fairly commonly agreed upon, but some say potatoes are essential, others say swedes (a type of turnip) or a mixture of both, and some liberals accept any combination of root vegetables.

liberals accept any combination of root vegetables.

The Cornish Pasty Association says:

A genuine Cornish pasty has a distinctive “D” shape and is crimped on one side, never on top. The filling for the pasty is made up of uncooked minced or roughly cut chunks of beef (not less than 12.5%), swede, potato and onion with a light seasoning. The pastry casing is golden in colour, savoury, glazed with milk or egg and robust enough to retain its shape throughout the cooking and cooling process without splitting or cracking. The whole pasty is slow-baked to ensure that flavours from the raw ingredients are maximised. No artificial flavourings or additives must be used. And, perhaps most importantly, it must be made in Cornwall.

The Cornish pasty is also a popular item in the U.S. state of Michigan, which has many people of Cornish descent. In 1968, Governor George Romney declared May 24 Michigan Pasty Day.

A GIANT PIE

1568: Munich

The wedding of Duke William of Bavaria (later William V) and Princess Renata of Lorraine was followed by a two-week gastronomic and musical extravaganza. The banquet on the day of the wedding consisted of seven courses. The first course alone consisted of fifteen peacocks in broth, forty-five roast pheasants with lemon and orange pieces, fifteen baked rabbits, five roast hares with pepper, fifteen capons in dough with sausage quarters and bread slices, fifteen breasts of lamb and goat, fifteen hazel hens and fifteen rock partridges with twenty-five wild pigeon in yellow Kaiser soup, beef in puff pastry with a sweet green sauce, trout cooked in sweet wine with parsley and pepper, crab, peacock gravy, almond sauce, venison in dark broth with almond mincemeat, 120 quail, 120 baked liver sausages, as well as capon liverwurst, fried lampreys in egg sauce, wild boar with dark French gravy and yellow Kaiser soup, fried goat, and fifteen “Rovig cakes.”

One of the most spectacular points in a superlatively spectacular banquet occurred when a giant pie was wheeled into the hall. To the surprise and delight of the guest, suddenly the lid of the pie broke open and out jumped Archduke Ferdinand's court dwarf. A guest at the wedding described the event: “He was

her hand's coat down. A guest at the wedding described the event. He was armed all over with a short spear and a sword, and put into a Pie or pasty, and brought to the table. He brake the Pie-crust, and with his sword drawn, fenced up and down upon the table, and made all laugh and admire.”

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1829: USA

Frances Trollope (mother of the English novelist Anthony Trollope) was in America—and not particularly impressed by the social habits of its citizens. She wrote of a birthday ball held in Cincinnati on this day:

In noting the various brilliant events which diversified our residence in the western metropolis, I have omitted to mention the Birthday Ball, as it is called, a festivity which, I believe, has place on the 22nd of February, in every town and city throughout the Union. It is the anniversary of the birth of General Washington, and well deserves to be marked by the Americans as a day of jubilee. . . . The arrangements for the supper were very singular, but eminently characteristic of the country. The gentlemen had a splendid entertainment spread for them in another large room of the hotel, while the poor ladies had each a plate put into their hands, as they pensively promenaded the ball-room during their absence; and shortly afterwards servants appeared, bearing trays of sweetmeats, cakes, and creams. The fair creatures then sat down on a row of chairs placed round the walls, and each making a table of her knees, began eating her sweet, but sad and sulky repast. The effect was extremely comic; their gala-dresses and the decorated room forming a contrast the most unaccountable with their uncomfortable and forlorn condition.

PRISON FOOD

1774: England

John Howard, the great prison reformer, inspected Newgate prison on this day. The prison population of the time was composed of thirty-eight criminals and fifty-eight debtors. Prisoners had to pay the jailer for any and every small item of food over and above the basic “board and lodgings.” Howard’s report noted that the prison was “white without and foul within.” The food allowance for the

prisoners was about 3/4 pound of bread per day before trial and 1½ pound per day after conviction.

RESTAURANTS & HOTELS

1823: New York, USA

An advertisement for a new public dining room ran in this day's edition of the *Albion, or, British, Colonial, and Foreign Weekly Gazette*.

New York Coffee House

William Sykes respectfully acquaints the public, that his new dining-rooms (which all accommodate 120 persons) being now completed, the ORDINARY will recommence on Tuesday, the 7th inst. Dinner on the table at 3 o'clock precisely. Price 50¢, including table liquors, or 12 dinner tickets for five dollars and twenty-five cents. The table will always be covered with an ample variety of the delicacies of the season; and Merchants, Brokers, and others, may rely on the utmost punctuality with respect to time also that the best attendance upon the table, which can be obtained, will be afforded. The bill of fare may be seen in the bar every day at 12 o'clock. A saddle of venison will be served at the Ordinary every Tuesday and Friday at 3 o'clock, and on Sundays at 2 o'clock. On the alternate days, hashed venison, and other esteemed dishes, will be added to the ordinary provision for the public table.

A second table will be covered at 4 o'clock every day, for the accommodation of those gentlemen whose avocations do not permit them to dine at an earlier hour. The Dinner will consist of meats removed from the ordinary, but served up anew, with hot vegetables &c. Price 25¢, or 12 tickets for 2 dollars and fifty cents.

The Coffee Room, which is commodiously and handsomely fitted up, will be daily furnished with a bill of fare, and gentlemen can dine at any hour, upon very short notice.

The Larder will be constantly supplied with every delicacy of the New York, Philadelphia, and other markets.

Board with or without Lodging, by the week, month or year, upon

BOARD, WITH OR WITHOUT LODGING, BY THE WEEK, MONTH OR YEAR, UPON moderate terms. The bed rooms are airy and neatly furnished; and the utmost attention will be paid to ensure the real comfort of Boarders and Travellers.

Private rooms for parties, and Dinners, Suppers &c. furnished in the best style.

Wines and Liquors, of superior quality, and genuine as imported.

Oyster, Terraplo, Ox Tail, Gravy or Peas Soup, every day at 11 o'clock.

FEBRUARY 23

AN OX ROAST IN THE PIAZZA

1530: Bologna, Italy

The coronation of Carlos I of Spain as Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire and King of Italy was followed, of course, by a fine banquet. While the nobility dined in style, an outdoor ox roast was put on for the townspeople—but it was not just simply an ox.

In the middle of the piazza a whole ox was there for the taking, complete with head and very long horns, stuffed with a wether, itself stuffed with chickens, capons, partridges, pheasants, pigeons, hares, thrushes and pigs, also whole; and because no one could turn it, they had devised certain winches, turned by various lansquenets who were standing around.

The stuffed ox on the spit in the piazza was an example of *engastration*—a method of stuffing one (or more) animals inside another. The method has been used since the Middle Ages and is still popular as a curiosity in modern times, as in the turducken (*see August 26*).

ANNIVERSARIES

1770: England

William Stark, a physician and pioneer in nutrition research, died on this day at

the age of twenty-nine years. On June 12, 1769, he had started a series of nutrition experiments, with himself as guinea pig. He said:

I confess it will afford me a singular pleasure if I can prove by my experiment, that a pleasant and varied diet is equally conducive to health, with a more strict and simple one; at the same time, I shall endeavour to keep my mind unbiassed in my search after truth, and, if a simple diet seems the most healthy, I shall not hesitate to declare it.

Over eight months he meticulously measured his food intake, and his excretions, and recorded how he felt.

By the end of August he was clearly suffering from scurvy. He briefly returned to a near normal diet until he felt better and then resumed his experiments, adding other foods in various combinations. He had proposed to change to fruit and vegetables in the New Year, but changed his mind and went onto a diet of honey puddings and cheese. He may not have died in February had he stuck to his original plan, as no doubt scurvy contributed to his death.

1854: South Africa

The Orange Free State was pronounced at Bloemfontain by the Boers. In 1954, a banquet was held on this day at the Maitland Hotel in Bloemfontain to mark the centenary of this event. The menu consisted of the following:

Grapefruit cocktail; *Euufees groentesop*; Rainbow trout Meunière; Asparagus with Hollandaise sauce; Roast spring chicken with bacon and mushrooms; Roast saddle of lamb with mint sauce, potatoes, green peas and cauliflower; Strawberries and ice cream, fancy pastries, fruit, cheese, and coffee. The wines offered included Bellingham Riesling, and Nederburg Select.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1886: USA

Charles Martin Hall, a young chemist working with aluminium extraction in Ohio, recorded in his diary on this day that he had discovered an inexpensive way to produce aluminium cookware. He had perfected an electrochemical

way to produce aluminum cookware. He had perfected an electrochemical process for extracting aluminium from bauxite. The product that eventuated from this discovery was called Wear-Ever, and the company which took it to the marketplace was the Aluminum Company of America (ALCOA).

1960: USA

Frederick M. Jones, for Thermo King Corporation, was granted Patent No. 2926005 for a “Thermostat and Temperature Control System.” His patent specifications noted that “[i]n general the invention relates to mechanisms for maintaining a substantially constant temperature in a controlled space. More particularly, the invention is concerned with vehicles in which perishable products are transported.”

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1774

During his second voyage aboard the *Resolution*, to the consternation of his crew, Captain James Cook became ill, and a great sacrifice was made to try to tempt his appetite and recover his health.

I was now taken ill of the bilious colic, which was so violent as to confine me to my bed; so that the management of the ship was left to Mr. Cooper, the first officer, who conducted her very much to my satisfaction. It was several days before the most dangerous symptoms of my disorder were removed. . . . When I began to recover, a favourite dog belonging to Mr Forster fell a sacrifice to my tender stomach. We had no other fresh meat whatever on board; and I could eat of this flesh, as well as broth made of it, when I could taste nothing else. Thus I received nourishment and strength from food which would have made most people in Europe sick; so true it is, that necessity is governed by no law.

After his recovery, Cook wrote “Mr Patten, the surgeon, was to me not only a skilful physician but an affectionate nurse and I should ill deserve the care he bestowed on me if I did not make this public acknowledgment.”

FOOD & WAR

1916: World War I, Commission for Relief in Belgium

Lord Eustace Percy wrote to Herbert Hoover on this day:

I am directed to transmit to you the enclosed programme of supplies for Belgium and Northern France, to which it has been decided that your imports should for the present be reduced.

PROGRAMME OF MONTHLY IMPORTS BY THE COMMISSION FOR RELIEF IN BELGIUM

- BELGIUM
- For the whole population:
 - 54,000 tons of wheat
 - 250 tons of yeast materials.
- For the destitute:
 - 2,400 tons bacon and lard
 - 3,000 tons peas and beans
 - 8,000 tons maize meal
 - 500 tons condensed milk.
 - Clothing and clothing materials.
 - Medical supplies (not including rubber goods).
- NORTHERN FRANCE
 - 16,000 tons of flour
 - 1,600 tons of bacon and lard

- 1,000 tons of soap (hard)
- 2,200 tons of rice
- 1,650 tons of condensed milk
- 1,650 tons of beans and lentils
- 1,320 tons of sugar
- 1,100 tons of coffee
- 1,320 tons of salt
- 2,200 tons of cerealine (maize)

FEBRUARY 24

FOOD & THE LAW

1652: Britain, a Proclamation by the Deputy-Governor of Leith

With the close of the Third English Civil War in 1651, Oliver Cromwell turned his attention to the control of Scotland. The headquarters for his military force in the country was Leith. Control applies at many levels, and in the following proclamation, the very important issue of food safety was tackled.

WHEREAS the Butchers of this garrison doe frequently forestal the Markets by buying up and ingrossing all the meate brought in by the Country, I doe hereby Order and Declare, that if any Butcher of this garrison shall presume to buy any dead victuall of any person whatsoever at any time hereafter, and not such as such butcher kills himself, he shall forfeit the price of all such meat, the one moyety to the use of the Garrison, and the other to the party discovering such offenders.

This to be proclaimed by beat of Drum in and about Leith Garrison, and affixed in the Market place.

FOOD & BOOKS

1893: USA

Charles Ranhofer published his classic book *The Epicurean* in 1893. Ranhofer was a chef at Delmonico's in New York, and the book was endorsed in a handwritten note by Charles Delmonico, dated February 24, 1893. Delmonico ended his testimonial with the words "A perusal will I think give one an appetite."

In Ranhofer's obituary, the *New York Times* referred to *The Epicurean* as one of the most complete treatises of the kind ever published."

Delmonico Sirloin Steak of Twenty Ounces, Plain

Cut from a sirloin slices two inches in thickness; beat them to flatten them to an inch and a half thick, trim nicely; they should now weigh twenty ounces each; salt them on both sides, baste them over with oil or melted butter, and broil them on a moderate fire for fourteen minutes if desired very rare; eighteen to be done properly, and twenty-two to be well done. Set them on a hot dish with a little clear gravy or Maître d'Hotel butter glaze.

Lobster à la Newberg or Delmonico

Cook six lobsters each weighing about two pounds in boiling salted water for twenty-five minutes. Twelve pounds of live lobster when cooked yields from two to two and a half pounds of meat and three to four ounces of lobster coral. When cold detach the bodies from the tails and cut the latter into slices, put them into a sautoir, each piece lying flat and add hot clarified butter; season with salt and fry lightly on both sides without coloring; moisten to their height with good raw cream; reduce quickly to half and then add two or three spoonfuls of Madeira wine; boil the liquid once more only, then remove and thicken with a thickening of egg-yolks and raw cream. Cook without boiling, incorporating a little cayenne and butter; warm it up again without boiling, tossing the lobster lightly, then arrange the pieces in a vegetable dish and pour the sauce over.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia: "When the rain ceased, we contrived to make a fire and boil a pot of tea, and warmed up a mess of gelatine-soup."

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1781: USA

An "Old Country Captain" wrote a letter to the *India Gazette* on this day. He mentions the use of arrack and punch in that country:

I am an Old Stager in this Country, having arrived in Calcutta in the Year 1736. . . . Those were the days, when Gentlemen studied *Ease* instead of *Fashion*; when even the Hon. Members of the Council met in Banyan Shirts, Long Drawers, and Conjee caps; with a Case Bottle of good old Arrack, and a Gouglet of Water placed on the Table, which the Secretary (a Skilful Hand) frequently converted into Punch.

FEBRUARY 25

A PIG DINNER

1939: USA

The Silver Anniversary Pig Dinner of the Kansas State Chapter Gamma Epsilon of Beta Theta Pi was held at the Wareham Hotel on this night.

Ye Menu

Grape Fruit

Celery Olives

-

Pan Fried Pork Tenderloin

Cherry Sauce

New potatoes in cream

Buttered frosted peas

Red raspberry sherbet

Hot roll

-

Combination salad

French dressing

-

Pecan roll ice cream

Salted nuts Coffee

A DIPLOMATIC DINNER

1989: China

President George Bush attended a welcoming banquet in his honor in Beijing. One of the dishes served was boar's penis soup. A reporter covering the event wrote: "His party was served boar's penis soup, or so the menu translation said. I wondered if it wasn't a linguistic mishap like 'leg of lamp,' but boar's penis soup is what everyone thought it was. We did our duty."

Traditional Chinese medicine ascribes therapeutic powers to the penis of animals such as the boar, deer, and tiger, considering them powerfully restorative and particularly enhancing of male virility.

FOOD PRESERVATION

1853: Britain

An early food preservation patent, No. 477, was granted to William Symington for "Improvements in Preserving Milk and other Fluids." His patent

for improvements in Preserving Milk and Other Fluids. His patent specifications describe the equipment, which

employed a vessel having a short tube of soft metal; to this tube is affixed one leading to the vessel containing the milk; the vessel, being deprived of air by being heated, or by an air-pump, is filled with milk by atmospheric pressure, after which the tube is closed by being pinched and subsequently soldered.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1841: Australia

From the journal of Edward John Eyre (1815–1901) on an expedition into the inland of Central Australia:

About two we loaded the pack animals, and wishing Mr. Scott a final adieu, set off upon our route. The party consisted of myself, the overseer, three native boys, nine horses, one Timor pony, one foal, born at Streaky Bay, and six sheep; our flour which was buried at the sand-hills to the north-west, was calculated for nine weeks, at an allowance of six pounds of flour each weekly, with a proportionate quantity of tea and sugar. The long rest our horses had enjoyed, and the large supply of oats and bran we had received for them, had brought them round wonderfully, they were now in good condition, and strong, and could not have commenced the journey under more favourable circumstances, had it been the winter instead of the summer season.

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

We arrived at the camp about one o'clock a.m.; and, in the morning of the 25th February, I led my party to the water-holes, which a kind Providence seemed to have filled for the purpose of helping us over that thirsty and dreary land. Our bullocks suffered severely from the heat; our fat-meat melted; our fat-bags poured out their contents; and every thing seemed to dissolve under the influence of a powerful sun.

LAST MEAL

1879: England

The notorious thief and murderer Charles Frederick Peace was hanged for his crimes

on this day. He apparently ate a hearty breakfast of very salty bacon, and, as the hood was being placed over his head, asked for a drink of water. His request was ignored.

FEBRUARY 26

ANNIVERSARIES

1827: England

This was the birthday of Dr. William Kitchiner (d. 1827), the author of *Apicius Recidivus, or, The Cook's Oracle* in 1817. Kitchiner was an optician, inventor, and notorious eccentric. It was highly unusual for the time for a man of his class to enter the kitchen at all, but not only did he cook and entertain with enthusiasm, he did all the preparation and cleaning up himself. He had a folding box which he called his Cabinet of Taste, in which he stored all of his prepared condiments, sauces, and flavoring essences. He was an absolute stickler for punctuality on the part of dinner guests, and his door was locked and guests not admitted after the appointed hour.

The Cook's Oracle became a best-seller in his own lifetime and is still an interesting and highly amusing read today. It contains the recipe for which Kitchiner was most proud, his famous wow-wow sauce for bouilli beef.

Wow Wow Sauce

Chop some parsley leaves very fine; quarter two or three pickled cucumbers, or walnuts, and divide them into small squares, and set them by ready; put into a saucepan a bit of butter as big as an egg; when it is melted, stir to it a tablespoonful of fine flour, and about half a pint of the broth in which the beef was boiled; add a tablespoonful of vinegar, the like quantity

of mushroom ketchup, or Port wine, or both, and a tea-spoonful of made mustard; let it simmer together till it is thick as you wish it; put in the parsley and pickles to get warm, and pour it over the beef; or rather send it up in a sauce-tureen.

THE POTATO FAMINE

1847: Ireland

The *Cork Examiner* ran a story about the efforts of the famous chef Alexis Soyer to feed the starving Irish during the potato famine.

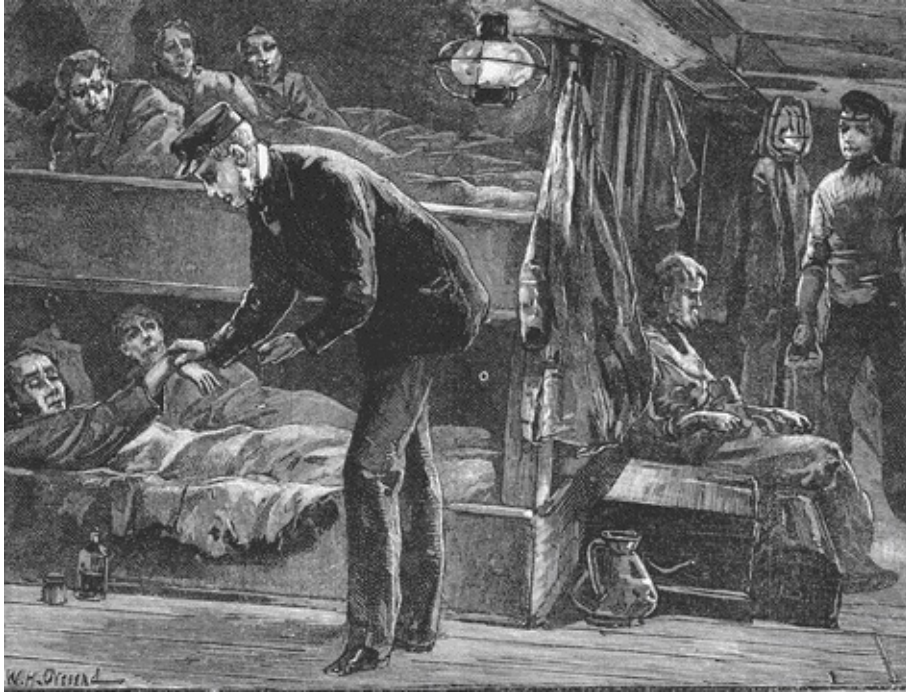
M. Soyer and the Soup Establishments for Ireland

We learn that the Government have resolved forthwith to despatch M. Soyer, the chef de cuisine of the Reform Club, to Ireland, with ample instructions to provide his soups for the starving millions of Irish people. Pursuant to this wise and considerate resolve, artificers are at present busied day and night, constructing the necessary kitchens, apparatus, &c, with which M. Soyer starts for Dublin direct to the Lord Lieutenant. His plans have been examined both by the authorities at the Board of Works and the Admiralty, and have, after mature consideration, been deemed quite capable of answering the object sought.

The soup has been served to several of the best judges of the noble art of gastronomy at the Reform Club, not as soup for the poor, but as a soup furnished for the day in the carte. The members who partook of it declared it excellent. Among these may be mentioned Lord Titchfield and Mr. O'Connell. M. Soyer can supply the whole poor of Ireland, at one meal for each person, once a day. He has informed the executive that a bellyfull of his soup, once a day, together with a biscuit, will be more than sufficient to sustain the strength of a strong and healthy man.

The food is to be "consumed on the premises." Those who are to partake enter at one avenue, and having been served they retire at another, so that there will be neither stoppage nor confusion. To the infant, the sick, the aged, as well as to distant districts, the food is to be conveyed in cars furnished with portable apparatus for keeping the soup perfectly hot. It would be premature to enter into further details. M. Soyer has satisfied the Government that he can furnish enough and to every of most necessities

Government that he can furnish enough and to spare of most nourishing food for the poor of these realms, and it is confidently anticipated that there will soon be no more deaths from starvation in Ireland.



Ireland Potato Famine

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1810: Britain

An early British patent (No. 3310) for a food preservation method was granted to Augustus de Heine. He proposed that the articles to be preserved be put into glass or metal vessels with valved lids, and a partial vacuum was then obtained by the use of the equipment he had invented.

FOOD & WAR

1945: Australia, World War II

The meat ration was reduced by almost 9 percent, and the Egg Priority Scheme for Vulnerable Groups, administered by State Egg Controllers, came into operation (and was in force until July 31, 1945). Pregnant and nursing mothers, young children, and invalids were required to be registered with a retailer. (See January 17, 1944.)

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1701: Ascension Island

Captain William Dampier's ship *Roebuck* foundered on Ascension Island on February 21. The men were marooned on the island for five weeks before being picked up by a vessel of the East India Company.

On the 26th following, we, to our great Comfort, found a Spring of fresh water, about 8 Miles from our Tents, beyond a very high Mountain, which we must pass over: So that now we were, by God's Providence, in a Condition of subsisting some Time; having Plenty of very good Turtle by our Tents.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1892: At Sea

Alexander Graham Bell, the scientist and inventor credited with the invention of the telephone, was at sea, in the vicinity of the Balearic Isles, aboard the steamship *Fulda*:

Went to bed early last night with a headache—wakened at 8:30 A.M. this morning by my funny German steward and his “Ah Meester Bell.” Bacon and eggs and coffee were brought in—and about ten o'clock I ate my breakfast and made my appearance on deck. . . . Have just been forward to see the steerage passengers have their dinner or lunch. They are divided into squads or messes—and one in each squad brings in the dinner. A large tin of nice looking soup full of macaroni and vegetables.

FEBRUARY 27

THREEPENNY DAY

Eton College, England

In 1504, upon the death of then provost Henry Bost, it was found that he had left some money to be invested to provide two pennies per year for each “colleger” (boarder) to ensure the boys got enough to eat. At that time, “tuppence” (two pence) would buy half a sheep, and since the time of Henry VI, it had been an Eton tradition that the only meat fed to collegers was mutton. The next provost, Henry Lupton, also made a bequest to the school, and the amount increased to threepence per boy.

Traditionally, on February 27, the boys gather in College Hall for the ceremony to mark these bequests. Each boy in turn takes a coin from a top hat and in exchange must recite a prayer for Provost Bost’s soul.

Eton scholars are commonly called “Tugs,” and it is debated whether this is from the Latin *togati*, meaning “wearers of gowns,” or alternatively from the “tugs of war” over scraps of “tough old mutton” in which they were frequently engaged.

“A name in college handed down

From mutton tough or ancient gown.”

—*The World*, February 17, 1893, p. 31.

FOOD & WAR

1778: American Revolutionary War

On this day, Congress resolved

That a company of bakers be raised to bake bread for the army, the company to consist of

One director, at \$50 a month and 3 rations a day

Three sub-directors at \$40 a day and 2 ditto.

The 1st of Feb. 1778. Resolved, That the sum of \$200,000 be appropriated to the use of the army.

12 weavers, at \$30 a day and 1 ditto

Sixty bakers at \$24 a day and 1 do.

1900: South Africa, Second Boer War

The Battle of Paardeberg came at the end of a long and gruelling guerrilla campaign orchestrated by the Boer commandant, Christiaan de Wet. It was the first significant British victory during the war, and the success was largely due to assistance from a contingent of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

The “Mounties” hold an annual Paardeberg Day dinner to celebrate the event. In the early decades after the war, the black humor often demonstrated by men who have experienced the battle front was shown in the names of the menu items, with such delicacies as “Emergency Ration with Muddy Spruit Sauce,” “Roast Beef à la Trek Oxen,” and “De Wet Soup.” The latter was jokingly said to be made from dirty river water flavored with putrefying corpse of horse and some “graying gruel of mule.”

FOOD BUSINESS

1921: England

Tate & Lyle Ltd. was formed on this day by the merger of the two rival companies. Henry Tate was born the son of a Lancashire clergyman and was apprenticed to a grocer in his teens. He was ambitious and entrepreneurial and soon built up a chain of his own shops, which he sold to buy into the sugar refining business. In 1872 he found his niche when he patented a method for making sugar cubes. Meanwhile, Abram Lyle, a Scot by birth, was also running a successful sugar refinery (on the Thames, as was Tate’s) specializing in syrup. There were many sugar refineries in Britain at the time, and competition was intense, but it appears that the two men had some sort of understanding: Tate would not make syrup, and Lyle would not make cubes. The understanding is surprising when you find out that the two men apparently never met.

The merger did not take place until long after both were dead. For many years after the merger, the more senior members of staff continued to be known as “Tatemen” or “Lyle-men” and the two London refineries referred to as “Tateses” and “Lyleses.”

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1879: USA

The discovery of saccharin was announced on this day. Saccharin was an accidental discovery on the part of Constantin Fahlberg, a Russian chemist and post-doctoral researcher in the laboratory of Ira Remsen at Johns Hopkins University. He subsequently became wealthy by establishing a factory to produce saccharin.

U.S. STATE FOOD

1989: New Mexico, USA

The New Mexico legislature adopted the *biscochito* (*bizcochito*) as the official state cookie on this day. The legislative process was slowed by some vigorous debate on the spelling of the anise-flavored cookie, but this was eventually resolved by allowing both, and New Mexico became the first state to declare an official cookie. The proposal was put in motion in the hope that it would help maintain traditional home baking.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1701: Ascension Island

Having been stranded on Ascension Island (*see* February 26), Captain William Dampier and his officers went on an exploratory walk:

I went up to see the Watering place, accompanied with most of my Officers. We lay by the way all Night, and next Morning early got thither; where we found a very fine Spring on the South-East-side of the high Mountain, about half a Mile from its Top: But the continual Fogs make it so cold here, that it is very unwholesome living by the Water. Near this place, are Abundance of Goats and Land-crabs. . . . we found a convenient Place for sheltering Men in any Weather. Hither many of our Men resorted; the hollow Rocks affording convenient Lodging; the Goats, Land-crabs, Men of War Birds, and Boobies, good Food; and the Air was here exceeding wholesome. About a Week after our coming ashore, our Men that liv'd at

this new Habitation, saw 2 Ships making towards the Island. Before Night they brought me the News; and I ordered them to tum about a Score of Turtle, to be in Readiness for these Ships if they should touch here: But before Morning they were out of Sight, and the Turtle were releas'd again. Here we continued without seeing any other Ship till the second of April.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1723: England

From the diary of Thomas Hearne, who was, for a time, an assistant librarian at the Bodleian library. This day was Ash Wednesday, and he refers to the old custom of pancakes on Shrove Tuesday.

It hath been an old Custom in Oxford for the Scholars of all Houses, on Shrove Tuesday, to go to Dinner at 10 Clock (at which time the little Bell call'd Pancake Bell rings . . .) and (to supper) at four in the Afternoon, and . . . Fritters at dinner, as there always used to be.

Fritters were a popular alternative to pancakes during Lent. They served the same purpose of using up the eggs and milk in the pantry before the forty-day period of abstinence from such luxuries.

To Make Fritters a Very Good Way

Take ten or twelve spoonfuls of the best Flower [flour,] and let it be well dry'd before the Fire; and mix with it a Quart of new Cream, eight Eggs, with Nutmeg, Cinnamon, Mace and Cloves, beat fine, and some Salt; two spoonfuls of Sack [sherry] and two of Orange-Flower-Water; mingle all well together, and cut thin slices of Golden Pippins [apples] and put into each of them before you put them in your Pan, and fry them in a little Lard; but dry them very well, that they may not eat greasy.

—*Court Cookery: or, the Compleat English Cook* (1723), by Robert Smith

FEBRUARY 28

A ROYAL WEDDING

1922: London, England

Princess Mary, Princess Royal and Countess of Harewood, the daughter of King George V and Queen Mary, was married to Viscount Lascelles on this day.

The wedding breakfast was held at 1 o'clock in the state dining room and the supper room of Buckingham Palace. The menu was as follows:

Consommé Soubrette

Filets de Sole à la Reine

Côtelette d'Agneau à la Princesse

Petits Pois

Chaufroid de Poularde à la Harewood

Langue et Jambon découpés

Salade Caprice

Timbales de Gaufres à la Windsor

Friandises

Dessert

Café

FOOD & POLITICS

1972: China

The Shanghai Communique was signed between the United States and China. In it the United States recognized that Taiwan was part of China. Apparently Henry Kissinger signed it after a sumptuous meal, at which he reputedly said to his hosts, "After a dinner of Peking Duck and Mao Tai, I'll sign anything."

FOOD & THE LAW

1252: England

The purity of wines has always been taken seriously by the authorities. In the time of Henry III, the following order was issued:

Concerning wines to be sold. Order to the sheriff of Lincolnshire to cause all of the king's old wines in his city of Lincoln to be sold by the view and testimony of trustworthy and law-worthy men of the same city and to answer for the issues of that sale to Robert Dacre, buyer of the king's wines throughout England, so that Robert might answer sufficiently for them to the king at the Exchequer. By the Steward

1898: England

The famous chef Auguste Escoffier and the equally famous hotelier César Ritz were sacked by the Savoy Hotel on this day. It was alleged that they had been entertaining potential investors for their new hotel, the Carlton, at the Savoy's expense, and that they had also stolen thousands of pounds worth of wine.

2009: China

After five years of drafting, the National People's Congress passed China's first comprehensive food safety law, to take effect on June 1. An "experimental" Food Hygiene Law had been enacted in 1982, and changes had been made to it in the following three decades. The new law was based on the Food Hygiene Law but was much more detailed and specific in its requirements.

The formulation of the law was the result of the increasing pressure on China to comply with international food safety standards and from increasing numbers of serious domestic food poisoning incidents.

MICHELIN RED GUIDE

2000: France

The one-hundredth edition of the Michelin Guide was released on this day. A record twenty-two restaurants had been awarded three stars, breaking what was believed to be an unofficial maximum of twenty-one. The *Guide Michelin* was originally produced only for French restaurants, but by 2012, twenty-three countries were covered in twenty-seven books.

The guide is highly influential and not without critics of its methods and decisions. The awarding or removal of a star can make or break a restaurant and the careers that go with it. The suicide in 2003 of Bernard Loiseau in Burgundy was said to have been triggered by the fear of the loss of a star.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1784: France

A royal French patent signed by Louis XVI was granted to Jean-Joseph Clause, chef to the governor of Alsace, for his *Pâte de foie gras de Strasbourg*.

Foie gras (literally “fat liver”) has become a controversial food on ethical grounds, its critics saying that the force-feeding of geese is a cruel practice. In previous times, when sensibilities were less tender, foie gras was purely and simply a very desirable luxury.

Clause did not *invent* foie gras; it was known and enjoyed by the ancient Greeks and Romans (who used figs to fatten the birds), but its production declined in the Middle Ages. Strasbourg became the focus of the revival of foie gras, thanks to the King’s interest in Clause’s particular preparation of the delicacy. Clause’s innovation was to enclose a whole “fat liver,” containing veal forcemeat, into a pastry case. At a later stage he added truffles to the mix. Needless to say, his fame was ensured, and the shop he opened some time later in Strasbourg was a great success.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1661: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys, who fails his Lenten resolution on the second day: “[A]nd there we dined And notwithstanding my resolution, yet for want of other victuals I did eat flesh this Lent: but am resolved to eat as little as I can ”

OTHER VICTUALS I did eat FRESH THIS EVEN, BUT am RESOLVED TO eat as little as I can.

1794: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde: “I read Prayers this Morning at Weston Church being a day appointed for a public Fast to be observed throughout England, to implore the Almighty’s Protection from our enemies. . . . Dinner to day Salt Fish & parsnips &c.”

1856: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau: “Mother says that the cat lay on her bread one night and caused it to rise finely all around her. . . . Stopped at Martial Miles’s to taste his cider. Marvellously sweet and spirited without being bottled; alum and mustard put into the barrels.”

March

MARCH 1

THE LENGTH OF A LEEK

2002: Wales

Today is the feast day of Saint David, the patron saint of Wales. The leek is the traditional symbol of Saint David and the national symbol of Wales.

For centuries, it has been a practice of patriotic Welshmen to wear a leek on this day. Shakespeare knew of the tradition, and Henry Teonge, chaplain aboard HMS *Assistance*, in 1679 wrote “St. Taffy’s [David’s] Day, and many aboard our ships do wear leeks.”

The *Times* ran an article on this day in 2002 on a decision by the European Union on the subject of leeks.

The Welsh are upset that the European Union has chosen today [March 1], St David’s Day, to interfere with one of the national symbols of Wales, the common or garden leek. European Union rules intended to make leeks conform to international standards come into effect today, and yesterday Nigel Evans, the Shadow Welsh Secretary, waxed indignant about it. Mr Evans, Conservative MP for Ribble Valley, said he was aghast at the insult that the principality’s national emblem should be regulated by Brussels in this unfeeling way on the country’s national day. The final insult is that they are being brought in on St David’s Day, he moaned. If it had been April 1 I think I could have properly understood it. The regulations mean that in future leeks will be divided into two classes. The leeks in class one must be of good quality. The white to greenish white part of the leeks must represent at least one third of the total length or half of the sheathed part, Mr Evans said. Size is determined by their diameter measured at right angles to the longitudinal axis above the swelling of the neck. The minimum diameter is fixed at 8mm for early leeks and 10mm for other leeks.

LIQUOR LAWS

1913: USA, the Interstate Liquor Act

More than half of the states were officially “dry” by 1900, but that did not mean that citizens of those states did not get alcohol. The postal service was run by the federal government, so a thirsty customer in a dry state could order it to be delivered by the mail service from a wet state. The Interstate Liquor Act, passed on March 1, 1913, effectively closed this loophole. The new law was a success for the Prohibitionists and a nice revenue raiser as a bonus to the tax-collectors, but there is no doubt that it played right into the hands of organized crime, which stepped in to meet the demand for alcohol.

1989: Iceland, Beer Day

In 1915, Iceland voted for prohibition in a referendum. The restrictions were partially eased in 1921, when Spain refused to buy Icelandic fish unless Iceland bought Spanish wine. Another referendum in 1935 legalized spirits but not strong beer. The remnants of prohibition were lifted on March 1, 1989, and beer was made legal. The day is now celebrated as Beer Day.

1990: New Zealand

The New Zealand Navy ceased the issue of the daily rum ration for sailors at sea. It was the last navy in the world to do so.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1904: USA

Auguste Gaulin of Paris, France, was granted U.S. Patent No. 753,792 for a “Process of Treating Milk or Similar Liquids.” The method “consists in breaking up the larger particles of the constituents of such substances and intimately mixing them preferably, though not necessarily, in connection with sterilization.” In other words, it was an early method of homogenization.

1990: Britain

A genetically modified (GM) strain of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae* (bakers' and brewers' yeast) was officially approved for food use in the United Kingdom on this day, making it the first GM food product to be approved anywhere in the world. The key feature of this new GM strain is that it more efficiently ferments sugar to carbon dioxide—the process by which bread dough rises.

FOOD BUSINESS

1824: England

The *Birmingham Gazette* carried an advertisement for a local businessman, John Cadbury, who opened his first shop on this day in the city: “John Cadbury is desirous of introducing to particular notice ‘Cocoa Nibs’, prepared by himself, an article affording a most nutritious beverage for breakfast.”

Cadbury was a Quaker, and the desire to reduce alcohol consumption was significant in the development and promotion of chocolate drinking by several prominent Quaker families.

FOOD & WAR

1942: Australia, World War II

The government began requisitioning all available tea on this day.

The Commonwealth Prices Commissioner (Professor Copland) called on “all persons who were in possession of 500 lbs. or more of tea at midnight on February 28, to furnish full particulars as to quantities, qualities, and costs of such tea.” The order was intended to solve the problems that had arisen due to the shortage of tea and the absence of any formal rationing system. The situation had provided opportunities for unscrupulous retailers to take advantage of customers and for greedy customers to hoard tea.

1950: Germany, Post-World War II

Post-war rationing of all foods except sugar ended on this day.

MARMALADE

1543: England

An early mention of marmalade occurs in a letter written by Bishop Edmund Bonner to King Henry VII, in a very mysterious context:

The arrest of ships at Seville was released as regards English ships at the coming hither of Ric. Grange, Mr. Gonson's servant. Ric. Graye warns Bonner that Wm. Estrige, married in St. Mary Hill parish and dwelling at St. Lucar, intends to present to the King divers costly boxes of marmalado given him by naughty friars of Seville, "suspected to have within them things of danger and great peril." Told Graye to warn the King and Council. The boxes are shipped in the Saber of Bristow. Graye promises to enquire further on his return to Seville.

RECIPE FOR THE DAY

1894: USA

One of the earliest American recipes for cooking whole soy beans appeared in a bulletin of the North Carolina Experiment Station dated this day.

The following directions for cooking the "soy" pea are given by Dr. J. H. Mills, of the Baptist Orphanage at Thomasville, N. C.:

Soak the peas till the skins come off. Then stir the peas in the water until the skins rise to the surface and skim them off. Boil the peas with bacon until soft. Add pepper and butter to suit and serve hot. If the peas are green the preliminary soaking may be omitted. This makes a most palatable dish, well liked by children.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1914: Brazil

Theodore Roosevelt was on an expedition in Brazil and noted in his diary that "Cherrie shot a large dark-gray monkey with a prehensile tail. It was very good

eating.” He was referring to George Cherrie, the expedition naturalist.

RICE PUDDING

1853: London, England

The Carlton Club was founded in 1832 as a highly exclusive London gentleman’s club. It drew its membership from the Conservative side of the political spectrum. These men had a day-to-day hand in the running of the country, and they also took their pudding very seriously.

The Committee of Management of the club received a complaint from the Duke of Birmingham about “the unfair way in which Members helped themselves to rice pudding.” The committee considered the complaint “most seriously” and resolved that should this be observed to be happening, the Steward would point out to the offending member “the impropriety of so doing.”

MARCH 2

AN ITALIAN RENAISSANCE MENU

1581: Parma, Italy

When Vincenzo, Duke of Mantua, married Margherita Farnese, the daughter of the

governor of the Spanish Netherlands, the feast following the ceremony was most spectacular. One of the guests wrote that “the bounty of these tables was almost beyond belief.” The ladies were “beautiful beyond measure and richly garbed,” the tables were laid with embroidered cloths, and the first service alone included “large salads decked out with various fantasies such as animals made of citron, castles of turnips, high walls of lemons; and variegated with slices of ham, mullet roes, herrings, tunny, anchovies, capers, olives, caviar, together with candied flowers and other preserves.” Some of the entremets were particularly impressive. They included three large marzipan statues: “One was the horse of Campidoglio come to life, the second Hercules with the lion, and the third a unicorn with its horn in the dragon’s mouth.”

PRISON FOOD

1779: England

The prison reformer John Howard visited Forton Prison, near Gosport, on this day. It was one of the locations where American prisoners were confined.

I found two hundred and fifty-one prisoners, March 2, 1779.

The table of regulations was almost the same with that for the French prisoners. The principal difference was, that in the victualling table, the bread allowance was then only one pound a day. The meagre day was Saturday, and against the weekly article of two pints of pease was added “or greens in lieu.”

THE NAVY RATION

1933: USA

A revised U.S. naval ration was set down on this day.

Each person, so entitled, may be served the following quantities of food each day:

- 8 oz. biscuit, or 12 oz. soft bread or 12 oz. flour
- 12 oz. preserved meat, or 14 oz. salt or smoked meat, or 20 oz. fresh meat or fresh fish or poultry
- 12 oz. dried vegetables, or 18 oz. canned vegetables, or 44 oz. fresh vegetables
- 4 oz. dried fruit, or 10 oz. canned fruit, or 6 oz. preserved fruit, or 16 oz. fresh fruit, or 6 oz. canned fruit or vegetable juices or 1 oz. powdered fruit juices or 6/10 oz. concentrated fruit juices
- 2 oz. cocoa, or 2 oz. coffee or ½ oz. tea

- 4 oz. evaporated milk, or 1 oz. powdered milk, or ½ pt. fresh milk
- 1.6 oz. butter
- 1.6 oz. cereal, or rice, or starch foods
- ½ oz. cheese
- 1.2 eggs
- 1.6 oz. lard or lard substitutes
- 2/5 gill oils, or sauces, or vinegar
- 5 oz. sugar
- Baking powder, and soda, flavoring extracts, mustard, pepper, pickles, salt, syrup, spices and yeast as required.

HOW TO MAKE NUT BUTTER

1899: USA

Dr. J. H. Kellogg of cornflake fame gave a talk on “Good and Bad Foods” on this day. He enthusiastically promoted a vegetarian diet, stressed the importance of cereal foods and nut foods, and included instructions on making nut butter.

Now I want to tell you how to make nut butter. Shell the nuts; take off the skins by putting them in the oven and heating sufficiently to shrink the nuts, when the skin can be rubbed off; then crush them. Nuts do not have to be roasted in order to remove the skins. It is only necessary to dry them. The mistake that is made in making nut butter is in roasting the nuts. They should not be roasted; for roasted nuts, like fried doughnuts, are indigestible. Now the question is, How are you going to make butter out of peanuts without this roasting process? I want to say that other kinds of nuts besides peanuts do not require any roasting. You can make butter out of almonds, walnuts, hazelnuts, and other kinds of nuts, without roasting; but the peanut must be cooked, for it is raw. There is a process by which it can be done without roasting the nuts.

FOOD BUSINESS

1863: London, England

The famous grocery store Fortnum and Masons was appointed Grocers to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales on this day.

It might have been Fortanon. It could have been Fortyahan. It hovered for years between Fortnam and Fortnane. It wasn't until 1707 that it settled down into Fortnum, collected its Mason and became the sweetest sound in the English language for those countless perceptive thousands who know that life can be sustained by bread and water, but it is given a sharp, upward boost by the more imaginative combination of caviar and champagne.

—from a booklet distributed to patrons, “The Delectable History of Fortnum & Mason”

ABOARD A FRENCH SHIP

1690: France

Robert Challes, the “King’s writer,” boarded the 38-gun, 500 ton French ship *L’Ecueil* as it was about to sail on the morning of March 2 as part of a convoy to the Far East. He immediately noted the difficulty in moving about the decks for “the ship is a farmyard.” The *L’Ecueil* was indeed carrying eight bullocks, two cows, six calves, twelve pigs, twenty-four sheep, five hundred hens, twenty-four turkeys, forty-eight ducks, twelve geese, and thirty-six pigeons. Challes also noted, to his dismay, that although there appeared to be sufficient provisions aboard, he doubted there would be enough wine to go around, particularly given the captain’s great capacity for drinking. Consequently, he had the steward tap some of the barrels in the hold and draw off and bottle sufficient to keep himself happy for the duration. He also appropriated other suitable snacks such as ham and salt tongue.

FAST FOOD

1984: USA

The first McDonald's franchise closed in Des Plaines, Illinois, after thirty years, and new drive-in premises opened across the street.

MARCH 3

A FREAK DINNER

1906: England

There was a vogue for "freak dinners" in America in the last couple decades of the nineteenth century, and the fad eventually made its way to London. Freak dinners were events put on by the extraordinarily (some say obscenely) wealthy who were looking for novel ways to entertain. They were hugely extravagant dinners in unusual venues or with interesting themes, and it was clear from the description that money was no object.

A month earlier, Mr. Harry Barnato had given a dinner to his diamond broker friends at the New Gaiety Restaurant, and the theme had been the "beleaguered fort at Port Arthur"—the port and Russian naval base in Manchuria which had been the site of a fierce battle in 1905.

On this day in 1906, the diamond brokers returned the compliment and entertained Mr. Barnato at the same venue. This time the idea was "to conjure up a vista of camp life" in the diamond mines of the Kimberley region in South Africa. In the center of the room a huge tent was erected, with plank tables and ordinary bench seats. The floor was strewn with sand, and the scene was decorated with rocks, digging implements, and bags of "gold dust." The attention to the theme extended to the wait staff: "Both the carving and the serving were performed by Boers and Kaffirs whose 'make-up' hid the fact that a couple of hours before they had been waiters in orthodox evening dress." More "Boers" with rifles slung over their shoulders maintained sentry duty.

The food included Turtle Soup Dutoitspan, which was dispensed from a large cauldron suspended over a charcoal fire. The soup was named for the first of the Kimberley mines discovered. For dessert, the trolley carried "three large blocks of ice, carved to represent a Cape cart drawn by bullocks" out of which ices were served. One newspaper man reported that "the only jarring note" was struck by the wine list.

(Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division [Reproduction number e.g., LC-USZC4-7925])

With the United States observing a number of wheatless days a week as part of the war effort, housewives needed advice on alternatives. The *Athens Banner* on this day published a list of grains and flours which could be used as wheat substitutes “in order that there not be any misunderstanding in the part of the merchants and buyers.” The list included bran, corn meal, hominy, rolled oats, buckwheat flour, oatmeal, cotton seed flour, feterita meal, kaffir flour, milo, cassava flour, and banana flour.

Cottonseed Flour Biscuit

One cup cottonseed flour, 1 cup wheat flour, 1 level teaspoon soda, 2 level teaspoons baking powder, 1 tablespoon sugar, 2 tablespoons lard, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup buttermilk. Sift dry ingredients together. Cut in lard with a knife. Add milk slowly. Turn out on a floured board. Knead slightly. Roll out $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick. Cut with a floured cutter.

Note.—If it is not convenient to use sour milk, sweet milk may be used by using 4 teaspoons baking powder instead of both soda and baking powder. Cottonseed flour is six times as nutritious as wheat flour and is good for all gastric troubles.

—*Magnolia Cook Book* (1910)

LOST IN TRANSLATION

1877: China

Baroness Anna Brassey, her husband, and thirty-nine others travelled around the world aboard their luxury yacht, *Sunbeam*, in 1876–1877. She later published a book about their experiences called *A Voyage in the Sunbeam: Our Home on the Ocean for Eleven Months*. On this date they were in Canton, and as a party of seventeen they set off “in chairs” for a tour of the city, and she writes:

We passed a restaurant where I was shown the bill of fare in Chinese of which this is a translation:—

WHICH THIS IS A TRANSLATION.—

BILL OF FARE FOR THE DAY.

One tael of black dog's flesh	eight cash.
One tael weight of black dog's fat	three kandareems of silver.
One large basin of black cat's flesh	one hundred cash.
One small basin of black cat's flesh	fifty cash.
One large bottle of common wine	thirty-two cash.
One small bottle of common wine	sixteen cash.
One large bottle of dark rice wine	sixty-eight cash.
One small basin of cat's flesh	thirty-four cash.
One large bottle of plum wine	sixty-eight cash.
One small bottle of plum wine	thirty-four cash.
One large basin of dog's flesh	sixty-eight cash.
One small bottle of pear wine	thirty-four cash.

One large bottle of timtsin wine	ninety-six cash.
One small bottle of timtsin wine	forty-eight cash.
One basin of congee	three cash.
One small plate of pickles	three cash.
One small saucer of ketchup or vinegar	three cash.
One pair of black cat's eyes	three kandareems of silver.

WHISKEY REBELLION

1791: USA

One of the defining events in America's early history came to be called the Whiskey Rebellion. It began on this day in response to a decision by Congress to impose an excise tax of seven cents a gallon on domestically distilled spirits to raise revenue to offset the debts incurred by the Revolutionary War. This was the first federal tax levied on a domestic product, and the farmers of Western Pennsylvania initiated the protest. Over the next few months the rioting spread, and properties were damaged. Peaceful negotiations failed, and in the end, George Washington himself led the militia into Pittsburgh in August 1794 and the movement, already in tatters, collapsed completely. The whiskey tax was not officially ended, however, until 1801.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769: At Sea

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks:

While in the boat among a large quantity of birds I had killed, 69 in all, . . . I found also this day a large Sepia cuttle fish laying on the water just dead but so pulled to peices by the birds that his Species could not be determind; only this I know that of him was made one of the best soups I ever eat. He was very large, differd from the Europeans in that his arms instead of being (like them) furnished with suckers were armd with a double row of very sharp talons, resembling in shape those of a cat and like them retractable into a sheath of skin from whence they might be thrust at pleasure.

1861: Australia

Explorers Robert O'Hara Burke and William John Wills were in the Cloncurry region on their ill-fated expedition. One of the party rode over a snake and killed it with his stirrup iron. The snake provided them with a meal that night, a name for the site ("Feasting Camp"), and, for Burke, a case of diarrhea.

[W]e then saw that it was an immense snake, larger than any I have ever before seen in a wild state. It measured eight feet four inches in length and seven inches in girth round the belly; it was nearly the same thickness from the head to within twenty inches of the tail; it then tapered rapidly. The weight was 11 [and a half] lbs. From the tip of the nose to five inches back, the neck was black, both above and below; throughout the rest of the body, the under part was yellow, and the sides and back had irregular brown transverse bars on a yellowish brown ground. I could detect no poisonous fangs, but there were two distinct rows of teeth in each jaw, and two small claws of nails, about three-eighths of an inch long, one on each side of the vent.

MARCH 4

PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATIONS

1857: Washington, DC, USA

The bill of fare for the supper at the ball following the inauguration of President James Buchanan on this day was described in the *New York Times*.

BILL OF FARE.

Paté Truffle.

Saddles of Venison and of Mutton.

Boar's Head, stuffed and decorated.

Boned and roasted Turkeys.

Spiced Rounds of Beef.

Fillets de Boeuf en Belle Vue.

Boned and Roasted Pheasants.

Tongues and Hams, decorated.

Aspic de Volaille.

Lobster, Chicken, and Russian Salad.

Terrapins and Oysters.

Cream and Water Ices, in fancy molds.

Marrons Glacée.

Charlotte Russe.

Meringues, Plombières, Bavaroises.

Jellies and Puddings.

Fancy Cakes, Preserved Fruits, Confectionery.

Roman Punch, Apple Toddy.

Wines, Liquors and Cordials.

1861: Washington, DC, USA

Abraham Lincoln personally ordered the bill of fare for his inauguration lunch at

the Willard Hotel: mock turtle soup, corned beef and cabbage, parsley, potatoes, and blackberry pie.

1873: Washington, DC, USA

Supper provided at the ball held after the inauguration of Ulysses S. Grant as the eighteenth president of the United States was “superb” according to the report in the *New York Times*.

Some idea of the extent of the supper may be gathered from a brief enumeration of the chief viands and dishes supplied: 10,000 fried oysters, 8,000 scalloped oysters, 8,000 pickled oysters, 63 boned turkeys of 12 pounds each, 75 roast turkeys, about 12 pounds each; 150 roast capons, stuffed with truffles; fifteen saddles of mutton, forty pieces of spiced beef, forty pounds each; 200 dozen quails, larded and roasted; 100 game patis [*sic*] fifty pounds each; 300 tongues, ornamented with jelly; thirty salmon, baked, Montpelier butter; 100 chickens, hot and cold; 400 partridges, Washington style; twenty-five boars heads, stuffed and ornamented; forty patis de foie gras, ten pounds each; 2,000 head-cheese sandwiches; 3,000 ham sandwiches; 3,000 beef tongue sandwiches; 1,600 bunches celery; thirty barrels salad; two barrels lettuce; 350 chickens boiled for salad; 2,000 pound of lobster boiled for salad; 6,000 eggs for salad; one barrel of beets; 2,500 loaves of bread; 8,000 rolls; 24 cases of Prince Albert crackers; 1,000 pounds of butter; 300 charlotte russes, 17 ½ pounds each; 200 moulds wine jelly; 200 moulds blancmange; 300 gallons ice cream, assorted; 200 gallons ices, assorted; 400 pounds mixed cakes; 150 large cakes, ornamented; 60 large pyramids, assorted; 25 barrels Malaga grapes, 15 cases oranges; 5 barrels apples; 400 pounds mixed candies; 10 boxes raisins, 200 pounds shelled almonds; 300 gallons claret punch; 200 gallons coffee; 200 gallons tea, 100 gallons chocolate.

Charlotte Russe was virtually obligatory on the dessert list at nineteenth-century dinners in England and America. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines it as “[a] dish made of apple marmalade covered with crumbs of toasted bread; also, a similar dish made with fruit other than apple. Hence, *charlotte russe*, a dish composed of custard enclosed in a kind of sponge-cake.”

The first reference given for the dish is in 1797, but the naming is mysterious. The “Russe” suggests a connection with Russia, either real or fancied, in the

mind of the person who named the dish, but it is not known what that connection might be. There are a number of contenders for the name “Charlotte.”

Charlotte Russe

- ½ lb. ratafia biscuits, ½ pint cream, 1 oz. sugar, 1 tablespoon sherry, 1 tablespoon raspberry jam, ½ oz. gelatine, 1 teaspoon vanilla.

Rub the jam through a sieve, dip the ratafias first into it, then into the sherry, and with them line the side of a plain Charlotte mould, the first row should be put in quite dry. Whip the cream to a stiff froth, add to it the sugar, vanilla, and melted gelatine. Fill the mould, when set, turn out and garnish the top with whipped cream.

—*Cookery* (London, Ontario, 1896), by Maud C. Cooke

THE FIRST LADY’S PUDDING

1946: USA

Ozark pudding was a family recipe of First Lady Bess Truman, and it is said to have been a favorite of the president. It was on the menu when Winston Churchill dined with the Trumans in Fulton, Missouri, on March 4, 1946, on the eve of his famous “Iron Curtain” speech. Her recipe found its way into the newspapers, and it became very popular.

Ozark Pudding

First one egg and three-quarters of a cup of sugar should be beaten together for a long time until they are very smooth. For best results they should be beaten with a fork. Then two tablespoonsful of flour and one-and-one-quarter teaspoonsful of baking powder should be mixed along with one-eighth of a teaspoonful of salt. The two mixtures should be combined. Then one-half cup of chopped nuts and one-half a chopped apple should be added along with one teaspoonful of vanilla. The batter should be baked in a greased pie tin in a medium oven.

(Mrs. Truman suggests that the pudding, when completed, be served with whipped cream or ice cream.)

FOOD & THE LAW

1915: France

The manufacture and sale of absinthe “and similar liqueurs” was banned in France for

its alleged harmful effects due to the presence of thujone, which has psychoactive properties in sufficient quantities. The law was not repealed until May 2011. Absinthe was made legal in the rest of the European Union in 1988, provided the amount of thujone fell within the agreed limit of 10 milligrams per kilogram, or 35 milligrams per kilogram for absinthe bitters.

ROYAL FOOD

1237: England

Henry III and Queen Eleanor were particularly fond of lampreys, and on this day a royal order was sent to Gloucester for supplies. Gloucester was famous for the quality and quantity of lampreys caught in the River Severn, and it remained so for centuries.

As to sending lampreys to the king, Order is given to the sheriff of Gloucester that since after lampreys all fish seem insipid to both the king and the queen, the sheriff shall procure by purchase or otherwise as many lampreys as possible in his bailiwick, place them in bread and jelly, and send them to the king while he is at a distance from those parts by John of Sandon, the king’s cook, who is being sent to him. When the king comes nearer, he shall send them to him fresh. And the king will make good any expense to which the sheriff may be put in this connection when he come to those parts. Witness the king at Canterbury on the fourth day of March.

DINING OUT IN WARSAW

1945: Warsaw, Poland

Café Fogg was opened—the first such place of refreshments and music to do so in the post-war ruined city. It was the project of Mieczysław Fogiel, an

enormously popular musician and singer decorated for his efforts to maintain the morale of the Polish people during the war. It is said that in the early days, all that the menu offered was bread and marmalade and cherry-leaf tea—and Fogiel’s music. The café had only a short life under the post-war communist regime, and it closed in 1951. A new Café Fogg was opened recently by Fogiel’s great-grandson.

MARCH 5

FOOD & RELIGION

1179: Rome

The Third Lateran Council met on the order of Pope Alexander. One of the canonical laws enacted at the Council forbade the exploitation of the people by visiting clergy. At the time, the clergy (and royalty) were entitled to “procure” supplies for themselves as they travelled the country. It was not uncommon for these “procurations” to leave seriously impoverished individuals and communities in their wake.

[I]t is recognized that it is a very serious matter and calls for correction that some of our brethren and fellow bishops are so burdensome to their subjects in the procurations demanded that sometimes, for this reason, subjects are forced to sell church ornaments and a short hour consumes the food of many days. Therefore we decree that archbishops on their visitations of their dioceses are not to bring with them more than forty or fifty horses or other mounts, according to the differences of dioceses and ecclesiastical resources; cardinals should not exceed twenty or twenty-five, bishops are never to exceed twenty or thirty, archdeacons five or seven, and deans, as their delegates, should be satisfied with two horses. Nor should they set out with hunting dogs and birds, but they should proceed in such a way that they are seen to be seeking not their own but the things of Jesus Christ. Let them not seek rich banquets but let them receive with thanksgiving what is duly and suitably provided.

A SCOTTISH DINNER

1880: Edinburgh, Scotland

The menu for a dinner of the Edinburgh Angus Club at the Royal Hotel on this day was as follows:

MENU

Soups.

Clear Mock Turtle. Puree of Asparagus.

Fish.

Salmon, Hollandaise Sauce. Fried Smelts.

Entrees.

Suprême of Chicken and Mushrooms.

Lobster Cutlets à la Victoria.

-

Cauliflower au Gratin.

-

SCOTCH HAGGIS

-

Relevés.

Roast Beef. Saddle of Mutton.

Farced Turkey. York Ham.

Roast.

Widgeons. Spring Chickens, Larded.

Entremets.

Sir Watkin Wynn Pudding. Maraschino Jelly, with Peaches.

Merangues à la Crème. Noyeau Jelly.

Compôte of Fruit à la Conde. Charlotte Russe.

-

Apricot Ice Pudding.

-

Anchovy Croutés.

-

Dessert.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1918: USA

Patent No. 1,258,627 was granted to Paul Welch for his “Method of Manufacturing Grape-Juice.” His process was much more efficient than previous methods and minimized waste of the pulp (hitherto usually discarded or used for fertilizer). Welsh called his product Grapelade. His entire product was purchased by the U.S. Army for supplying troops during World War I. Returning soldiers who had developed a taste for the product ensured that Welch’s business thrived after the war.

Welch's

THE NATIONAL DRINK

The refreshing part of a picnic.

Welch's adds character to a luncheon whether outdoors or in. It is a revivifying drink, charged with the crisp and golden freshness of October mornings.

Welch's is the national drink because clear-headed efficiency is now the national fashion. It was founded on a principle and stands for uplift of the nation.

Welch's is an economical drink because of its concentrated richness. Most people prefer it with water added and it combines with lemonade to make an inexpensive but exceedingly attractive punch-bowl beverage.

Have you tried beginning the day with a small glass of Welch's? It is a delightful fruit course for breakfast. About four ounces is the right amount.

How many of the 99 dandy ways to serve Welch's have you tried?

Give the folks a pleasant surprise. Write today for "Welch Ways"—the beautifully illustrated book with all the 99 directions. It is mailed free.

Buy Welch's in bottles, 10c and up, from your grocer, druggist or confectioner. Say "Welch's" at the soda fountain.

Look for the star where Welch's is displayed.

*Copyright 1921
By The Welch Grape Juice Company*

The Welch Grape Juice Company, Westfield, N.Y.

Vintage Ad for Grape Juice

(© Bettmann/Corbis/AP Images)

ANNIVERSARIES

1836: USA

This was the birthday of Charles Goodnight, who is credited with inventing the first chuck wagon in the 1850s or 1860s. His idea was a modification of an army supply wagon and was intended for the use of cowboys, settlers, and other travellers across the prairies. His improvements to the basic wagon included the

provision of shelves and storage compartments for various pieces of equipment, food, medical supplies, and so forth. An important innovation was the “chuck box” added to the rear of the wagon, which had a hinged lid that, when folded down, became a flat surface for food preparation.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1776: England

Scurvy was the scourge of seamen for centuries, and there were many theories as to its cause and treatment. It was eventually proven to be due to vitamin C deficiency. Individual voyagers and the naval forces of the world were slow to formally accept the anecdotal evidence that fresh fruit and vegetables were the solution. It was becoming clearer by the time of Captain James Cook’s voyages.

The Method taken for preserving the Health of the Crew of His Majesty’s Ship the Resolution during her late Voyage round the World. By Captain James Cook, F.R.S. Addressed to Sir John Pringle, Bart. P.R.S.

Mile-end, March 5, 1776

Sir,

As many gentlemen have expressed some surprise at the uncommon good state of health which the crew of the Resolution, under my command, experienced during her late voyage, I take the liberty to communicate to you the methods that were taken to obtain that end. . . . I shall not trespass upon your time in mentioning all those articles, but confine myself to such as were found the most useful.

We had on board a large quantity of Malt . . . This is without doubts one of the best antiscorbutic sea-medicines yet found out

. . . .Sour Kraut, of which we had also a large provision, is not only a wholesome vegetable food, but, in my judgement, highly antiscorbutic and spoils not by keeping. A pound of it was served to each man, when at sea, twice a week or oftener, when it was thought necessary.

Portable Soup or Broth was another essential article, of which we had likewise a liberal supply. An ounce of this to each man, or such other proportion as was thought necessary, was boiled with their pease three days in the week; and when we were in places where fresh vegetables could be procured, it was boiled with them and with wheat or oatmeal every morning for breakfast, and also with dried pease and fresh vegetables for dinner. It enabled us to make several nourishing and wholesome messes, and was the means of making the people eat a greater quantity of greens than they would have done otherwise.

Further, we were provided with Rob of lemons and oranges; which the surgeon found useful in several cases.

Rob: the herbalist and physician Robert Culpeper (1616–1654) described it thus:

1. Rob, or Sapa, is the juice of a fruit, made thick by the heat either of the sun, or the fire, that it is capable of being kept safe from putrefaction. 2. Its use was first invented for diseases in the mouth. 3. It is usually made, in respect of body, somewhat thicker than new Honey. 4. It may be kept about a year, little more or less.

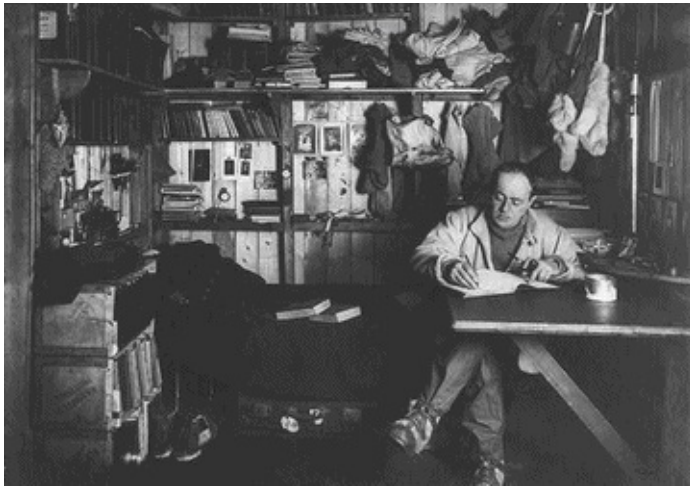
To make a Veal Glue, or Cake Soop, to be carried in the Pocket

Take a Leg of Veal, strip it of the Skin and the Fat, then take all the muscular or fleshy Parts from the Bones; boil this Flesh gently in such a Quantity of Water, and so long a Time, 'till the Liquor will make a strong Jelly when it is cold: This you may try by taking out a small Spoonful now and then, and letting it cool. Here it is to be supposed, that tho' it will jelly presently in small Quantities, yet all the Juice of the Meat may not be extracted; however, when you find it very strong, strain the Liquor through a Sieve, and let it settle; then provide a large Stew-pan, with Water, and some *China* Cups, or glazed Earthen Ware; fill these Cups with Jelly taken clear from the Settling, and set them in a Stew-pan of Water, and let the Water boil gently 'till the Jelly becomes thick as Glue: After which, let them stand to cool, and then turn out the Glue upon a Piece of new Flannel, which will draw out the Moisture; turn them once in six or eight Hours, and put them upon a fresh Flannel, and so continue to do 'till they are quite dry,

and keep it in a dry warm Place: This will harden so much, that it will be stiff and hard as Glue in a little Time, and may be carried in the Pocket without Inconvenience. You are to use this by boiling about a Pint of Water, and pouring it upon a Piece of the Glue or Cake, of the Bigness of a small Walnut, and stirring it with a Spoon 'till the Cake dissolves, which will make very ftrong good Broth. As for the seasoning Part, every one may add Pepper and Salt as they please, for there must be nothing of that Kind put among the Veal when you make the Glue, for any Thing of that Sort will make it mouldy.

—*The Whole Duty of a Woman, Or, An Infallible Guide to the Fair Sex* (1717)

1912: Antarctica



Robert Falcon Scott

(*Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division [Reproduction number e.g., LC-USZ62-12998]*)

Robert Falcon Scott and his small party, having failed to be first to reach the South Pole, were on the return journey and were in dire straits:

Lunch. Regret to say going from bad to worse. . . . We went to bed on a cup of cocoa and nemmican solid with the chill off. The result is telling on all.

of cocoa and pemmican sold with the same aim. The result is tending on all, but mainly on Oates, whose feet are in a wretched condition. . . . We started march on tea and pemmican as last night—we pretend to prefer the pemmican this way We cannot help each other, each has enough to do to take care of himself We talk of all sorts of subjects in the tent, not much of food now, since we decided to take the risk of running a full ration. We simply couldn't go hungry at this time.

The last entry in Scott's journal was on March 29. They had been without food for a week, in gale conditions. He is presumed to have died on this date.

1914: Brazil

From Theodore Roosevelt's *Through the Brazilian Wilderness*: "Cherrie [George Cherrie, the expedition naturalist] shot a jacu, a handsome bird somewhat akin to, but smaller than, a turkey; after Cherrie had taken its skin, its body made excellent canja."

Jacu: one of several species of Guan. It is described as "about the size of a large capon, black, with the figure of a turkey hen."

Canja: a popular Portuguese and Brazilian soup usually made from chicken.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1814: England

Jane Austen wrote to her sister Cassandra:

Henrietta Street: Saturday

A cold day, but bright and clear . . . I am sorry to hear that there has been a rise in tea. I do not mean to pay Twining till later in the day, when we may order a fresh supply. I long to know something of the mead, and how you are off for a cook.

MARCH 6

A DIPLOMATIC DINNER

1896: Denmark

The menu of a dinner held at the Russian Legation in Copenhagen on this day was as follows:

Le consommé Sevigné.

Les petites rissoles à la Maréchale.

Les quenelles de brochets à la Joinville.

Les selles de veau à la Parisienne.

Les cotelettes de volaille à la Maintenon.

Les truffes en serviette.

Les sorbets au marasquin.

Les faisans rôtis sur croustades.

Les cardons à l'Espagnole.

Les poudings à la Diplomate.

Les glaces Dame blanche.

Les Desserts.

A BREAD BEQUEST

1671: England

An inscription on a tombstone in Horley churchyard states that Thomas Saul, who died on March 6, 1671, gave to the poor of Harley “six dozen of bread yearly for ever, to be given at Yellow Well on St. Thomas’s Day . . . given to poor widows and boys on the day . . . the arrears for two or three years sometimes being given away together.”

FOOD FIRSTS

1912: USA

The records of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office show that the Oreo cookie was introduced to the American public on this day. The National Biscuit Company launched “three entirely new varieties of the highest class biscuit in a new style.” The “Trio” comprised the Oreo Biscuit (“two beautifully embossed chocolate-flavored wafers with a rich cream filling at 30 cents per pound”), the Mother Goose Biscuit (“a rich, high class biscuit bearing impressions of the Mother Goose legends at 20 cents per pound”), and the Veronese Biscuit (“a delicious, hard sweet biscuit of beautiful design and high quality at 20 cents per pound”).

The Oreo is made by the Kraft Company. It is the most popular cookie in the world and now comes with a wide range of flavors.

1930: USA

The first quick-frozen food was put on sale by the Birdseye Co. in Springfield, Massachusetts. The Springfield Experiment Test Market supplied eighteen stores with twenty-six different products, including peas, spinach, raspberries, and loganberries.

FOOD & THE LAW

1938: Germany

The Reich government forbade the brewing of bock beer, porter, and other very heavy beers except for export. Beer retailers were allowed to serve beer already in stock until supplies were exhausted. The object of the order was to conserve grain for livestock, and the exception for exported beers was on account of the income it generated.

1961: USA

The Food Additives Amendment of 1958 came into force on this day. A list of 700 food substances already in use and generally recognized as safe (GRAS)

... food substances already in use and generally recognized as safe (GRAS), were to be exempted from the requirement for testing food additives for safety before they could be used.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1888: USA

Max Sialoff of Berlin, Germany, was granted U.S. Patent No. 378982 for a “Vending Apparatus.” He had received German letters patent for his invention on August 18, 1887. His piece of equipment was explained in the patent documents as

apparatuses containing a potable liquor or certain articles—such as cigars, newspapers, and others—and which can be put in operation with the introduction of a coin of determinate size and the subsequent movement of a handle, so as to deliver a measured quantity of the liquor or one of the articles contained in the apparatus; vending machine.

FOOD PRESERVATION

1847: USA

A correspondent to the *Scientific American* magazine published on this day described his experiments with the drying of strawberries:

Dried Strawberries

Last summer, by way of experiment, when strawberries were plentiful, I attached threads to their stalks, and hung up a few which were over-ripe to dry. I placed them inside a window facing the south, where they remained from June last until the present time, (Jan.28.) They have just been tasted, and the result is most satisfactory. That sweet refreshing acid which is peculiar to the strawberry in full perfection; the flavor of the fruit, without any watery taste, is delicious, it dissolves in the mouth as slowly as a lozenge, and is infinitely superior to the raisin, which so soon bring on a feeling of satiety. The strawberry thus dried is a stomachic. The experiment may be tried when the fruit is so ripe as to be scarcely worth gathering, without any further expense or trouble than being hung up.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1661: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

At the office all the morning. At dinner Sir W. Batten came and took me and my wife to his house to dinner, my Lady being in the country, where we had a good Lenten dinner. Then to Whitehall with Captn. Cuttle, and there I did some business with Mr. Coventry, and after that home, thinking to have had Sir W. Batten, &c., to have eat a wigg at my house at night.

Wiggs were soft, light bread rolls flavored with caraway seeds and so called because they were originally “wedges” in shape. There were many variations depending on the degree of enrichment or impoverishment of the dough (eggs, sugar), the recipient (“economical” for farmworkers), or the season (wiggs were popular Lenten food).

To make Wiggs

You must take two Pounds of Flour, and a Quarter of a Pound of Butter, as much Sugar, a Nutmeg grated, a little Cloves and Mace, and a Quarter of an Ounce of Carraway Seeds, Cream and Yest [yeast] as much as will make it up into a light Paste, make them up, and set them by the Fire to rise ‘till the Oven be ready; they will quickly be baked.

—*The Lady’s Companion, or, an Infallible Guide to the Fair Sex* (1743)

1712: America

From the diary of William Byrd of Westover, Virginia: “I rose about 7 o’clock and read nothing because of the company. However, I said a short prayer and drank chocolate for breakfast. . . . Colonel Hill also came to dine with us and I ate some pidgeon and bacon for dinner.”

1865: England

In the *English Note-Books* of Nathaniel Hawthorne, he writes of his meal aboard

the *Princeton*:

These daily lunches on shipboard might answer very well the purposes of a dinner; being in fact, noonday dinners, with soup, roast mutton, mutton chops, and macaroni pudding—brandy port and sherry wines. . . . There is a satisfaction in seeing Englishmen eat and drink, they do it so heartily, and on the whole, so wisely,—trusting so entirely that there is no harm in good beef and mutton, and a reasonable quantity of good liquor; and so these three hale old men, who had acted on this wholesome faith so long, were proofs that it is well on earth to live like earthly creatures.

MARCH 7

IN THE NEWS

1881: France

The *New York Times* ran an article on the vegetarian movement in France.

Vegetarianism in France

A vegetarian society has been founded in Paris, and has just issued its first Bulletin, in which we are told that the object of the society is to discover the “elementary régime most advantageous to the human species.”

Vegetarianism ought to commend itself to many French people, with whom “rosbif” and “bifteck” are not the institution they are in England. Indeed, the lower and lower middle classes, like the peasantry and the bulk of the working class in Scotland, are vegetarians without being conscious of it, and probably more from necessity than choice. The Paris society has been founded by Dr. Hureau de Villeneuve, who, as he tells us in an eloquent article in the Bulletin, became a vegetarian on account of repeated attacks of rheumatism, from which several of his ancestors had died. After some years of exclusively vegetarian diet, the Doctor has got rid of all traces of rheumatism and is completely restored. . . . The moral seems to be that each man ought to find out what suits himself.

1885: London, England

Pall Mall Gazette contained a review by Oscar Wilde of a book called *Dinners and Dishes* by “Wanderer.” Wilde managed to turn what was supposed to be a review of another’s work into a witty commentary on his own opinions on various dishes.

Under these circumstances we strongly recommend *Dinners and Dishes* to every one: it is brief and concise and makes no attempt at eloquence, which is extremely fortunate. For even on ortolans who could endure oratory? It also has the advantage of not being illustrated. The subject of a work of art has, of course, nothing to do with its beauty, but still there is always something depressing about the coloured lithograph of a leg of mutton.

As regards the author’s particular views, we entirely agree with him on the important question of macaroni. “Never,” he says, “ask me to back a bill for a man who has given me a macaroni pudding.” Macaroni is essentially a savoury dish and may be served with cheese or tomatoes but never with sugar and milk. There is also a useful description of how to cook risotto—a delightful dish too rarely seen in England; an excellent chapter on the different kinds of salads, which should be carefully studied by those many hostesses whose imaginations never pass beyond lettuce and beetroot; and actually a recipe for making Brussels sprouts eatable. The last is, of course, a masterpiece.

But our author is not local merely. He has been in many lands; he has eaten back-hendl at Vienna and kulibatsch at St. Petersburg; he has had the courage to face the buffalo veal of Roumania and to dine with a German family at one o’clock; he has serious views on the right method of cooking those famous white truffles of Turin of which Alexandre Dumas was so fond; and, in the face of the Oriental Club, declares that Bombay curry is better than the curry of Bengal. In fact he seems to have had experience of almost every kind of meal except the “square meal” of the Americans. This he should study at once; there is a great field for the philosophic epicure in the United States. Boston beans may be dismissed at once as delusions, but soft-shell crabs, terrapin, canvas-back ducks, blue fish and the pompono of New Orleans are all wonderful delicacies, particularly when one gets them at Delmonico’s. Indeed, the two most remarkable bits of scenery in the States are undoubtedly Delmonico’s and the Yosemite Valley; and the former place has done more to promote a good feeling between England and America than anything else has in this century.

We hope the “Wanderer” will go there soon and add a chapter to *Dinners and Dishes*, and that his book will have in England the influence it deserves. There are twenty ways of cooking a potato and three hundred and sixty-five ways of cooking an egg, yet the British cook, up to the present moment, knows only three methods of sending up either one or the other.

FOOD & THE LAW

1849: Slovenia

The long-standing tax on the trapping of the edible dormouse (*Myoxus glis*) was abolished. A century later, after World War II, a close season from September 25 to November 15 was established.

The trapping of dormice for their meat, fat, and fur has been an important part of Slovenian culture for centuries. The Romans loved dormice too, and there is a recipe for their preparation in *Apicius: De re coquinaria*, a text thought to have been written in the late fourth or early fifth century:

Glires: isisio porciono, item pulpis ex omni membro glirum, trito cum pipere, nucleis, lasere, liquamine farcies glires, et sutos in tegula positos mittes in furnun aut farsos in clibano coques.

Mice: stuff the mice with minced pork, mouse meat from all parts of the mouse ground with pepper, pine kernels, laser and garum. Sew the mouse up and put on a tile on the stove. Or roast in a portable oven.

Laser, or silphium: A plant much used in classical antiquity in both food and medicine, the identity of which is not known for certain as it is now presumed to be extinct. It is likely that it is from the genus *Ferula*, which includes *asafoetida*.

Garum: A condiment made from fermented fish, which was widely used by the Romans. There is no extant recipe, but it was probably very similar to the fish sauce enjoyed in Southeast Asia.

MARCH 8

A FUTURIST LUNCH

1931: Italy

The Italian Futurists celebrated the opening of their new restaurant, the Santopalato (the Holy Palate) with a luncheon on this day. The restaurant was designed by the Futurist architect Nicola Diulgheroff and was aluminium clad from floor to ceiling, with illuminated columns and porthole windows. The luncheon menu was quite as startling, and the menu included the names of the originators of each dish.

1. *Antipasto intuitive*
2. *Aerovivanda*—tattile, con rumori ed odori (ideato da Fillia)
3. *Brodo solare* (ideato da Piccinelli Ernesto)
4. *Tutturiso*—con vino e birra (ideato da Fillia)
5. *Carneplastico* (ideato da Fillia)
6. *Ultravirile* (ideato da P. A. Saladin)
7. *Paesaggio alimentare* (ideato da Angelo Giachino)
8. *Mare d'Italia* (ideato da Fillia)
9. *Insalata mediterranea* (ideate da Burdese Celeste)
10. *Pollofiat* (ideato da E. Pranpolini)
11. *Dolcelastico* (ideato da Mino Rosso)
12. *Frutti d'Italia* (composizione simultanea)

Antipasto Intuitive: an orange from which the flesh had been removed, filled with chopped salami and Cirio pickles, and with grissini sticking out like rays of light.

Carneplastico: “an original dish suggesting the Italian landscape.” It consisted of

an upright cylinder of minced veal stuffed with eleven vegetables, topped with honey, and the base surrounded by a coil of sausages and three balls of minced chicken.

FOOD FIRSTS

1656: Japan/India

The first mention of soy sauce in a European language (Dutch) was in a list of provisions ordered from the Deshima factory in Nagasaki for delivery to the Dutch settlement in Bengal, India, by the Dutch East India Company. The order was for “8 little kegs of good soy [sauce], 2 kegs of pickled vegetables, 2 kegs of good sake . . .”

SOCIAL FORCES AT WORK

1917: Russia, Russian Revolution

One of the first incidents, what came to be called the Russian Revolution, occurred in Petrograd (St. Petersburg) on this day, which was Women’s Day.

Russia was suffering from serious social and economic problems, which had been exacerbated by World War I, and many Russians were starving. A riot began apparently spontaneously by women who had been spending forty hours a week in bread queues, sleeping in the lines so as not to lose their place. A hungry, angry group began to form in the worker’s district and began to march to the city center, gathering supporters along the way until there were 100,000 members. Over the next few days the movement gathered momentum, and the military was called in. Disaffected soldiers deserted in huge numbers, however, and joined the rioters. A provisional government was proclaimed on March 12, and Tsar Nicholas II abdicated on March 15.

CHAMPAGNE HISTORY

1735: France

A royal decree ordained that the champagne bottle must contain a pint (Paris measure) and must not weigh less than twenty-five ounces; the corks must be

attached with a string with three threads, tightly twisted and knotted in a cross on the cork. The use of string was also used for some still wines.

From 1760 onwards, wire gradually replaced string. The Abbot Pluche apparently also advised that corks could be sealed, if desired, to prevent “misunderstandings and infidelities.”

FOOD & THE LAW

1785: Massachusetts, USA

An early American food safety law was enacted on this day. It stated:

Whereas some evilly disposed persons, from motives of avarice and filthy lucre, have been induced to sell diseased, corrupted or unwholesome provisions, to the great nuisance of public health and peace:

Be it enacted that if any person shall sell any such diseased, corrupted contagious or unwholesome provisions, whether for meat or drink, knowing the same, without making it known to the buyer shall be punished by

- –Fine
- –Imprisonment
- –Standing in the pillory
- –Binding to the good behavior

Or one or more of these punishments to be inflicted according to the degree and aggravation of the offence.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

1999: China

One hundred and forty-eight people became ill from eating donkey meat soup at a café in the central Chinese city of Luoyang, where the dish is a specialty. The soup had been laced with nitric acid by a rival restaurant owner and four

accomplices. The restaurant owner was sentenced to death, with the sentence being suspended for two years to allow for repentance, and was expected to be commuted to life imprisonment.

CHUPATTIES

Chupatty is an Anglo-Indian term for an unleavened cake of bread generally made of coarse wheaten flour, patted flat with the hand, and cooked on a griddle. Chupatties are the staple food of upper India, but during the mutiny of 1857, they performed another function—they were used as vehicles for subversive messages of discontent and perhaps treason.

On March 8, 1857, a *Times* correspondent in Bombay wrote:

A strange and to some observers a very disagreeable incident has occurred in the North-west. A few days since, a chowkeydar, or village policeman, of Cawnpore ran up to another in Futtteghur and gave him two chupatties. These are indigestible little unleavened cakes, the common food of the poorer classes. He ordered him to make ten more, and give two to each of the five nearest chowkeydars with the same order. He was obeyed, and in a few hours the whole country was in commotion with chowkeydars running about with these cakes. The wave swept province after province with a speed at which official orders never fly. The magistrates were powerless, and the chupatties at this moment are flying westward. Nobody has the least idea what it all means. Some officers fancy it is a ceremony intended to avert the cholera; others hint at treason—a view encouraged by the native officials; others talk of it as a trifle—a joke. For myself, I believe it to be the act of some wealthy fool in pursuance of a vow; but its significance is this: there are some 90,000 policemen in these provinces. If they should perchance imbibe dangerous ideas, how perfect is their organisation.

From village to village brought by one messenger and sent forward by another passed a mysterious token in the shape of one of those flat cakes made from flour and water, and forming the common bread of the people, which in their language, are called *chupatties*.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1872: Wisconsin, USA

A small group of Icelanders settled on Washington Island, Wisconsin, in the 1870s. One of them wrote home to his family on this day and described the food in his new home:

One is unaccustomed to live on pancakes, syrup, pork and beans, as well as wheat bread and from twelve to fourteen cups of coffee each day, because here in America it is customary to fill the cup each time it becomes empty, during the course of a meal, and those who have a tendency to be thirsty can drink a goodly number of cups. Some have five meals a day; particularly Germans and Norwegians.

MARCH 9

SAINT CONSTANTINE'S DAY

There used to be a tradition in Cornwall, England, on this day of eating limpet pie. There is a church dedicated to Constantine in Harlyn, a small village in the parish Saint Merran (or Merryn). There is an old story that a family by the name of Edwards had, for several generations, held one of the cottages adjoining the church at an annual symbolic rent of a limpet pie on Saint Constantine's Eve, paid to the lord of Harlyn manor. The pie, also called Harlyn pie, contained limpets, raisins, and sweet herbs.

DINING AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE

1984: London, England

The menu for what appears to be an ordinary family meal rather than a state occasion at Buckingham Palace on this day does not indicate whether it is for lunch or dinner. Until very recent times, English royal menus were always written in French, but at this meal, the chef appeared to be making some sort of nationalistic statement when it came to the dessert.

Cocktail de Crevettes.

-

Contrefilet de Boeuf Bordelaise

Courgettes Pochées

Pommes Fondantes

-

Old English Apple Pie.

FOOD & WAR

1778: American Revolutionary War



Washington and Lafayette visiting the suffering parts of the army

(Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division [Reproduction number e.g., LC-USZ62-819])

In response to a letter from Governor Morris (see February 19) a committee of Congress met to consider his recommendations in respect of his proposal to feed the army at Valley Forge. The meeting suggested that

Commissary General of Purchases be directed to send his Orders to the several Deputy Commissaries of Purchases . . . to Contract for and secure from time to time, in the most Convenient season and places for that purpose, and in the most prudent and effectual manner possible, viz: Ten

thousandd barrels of Fish, well picked and saved for Use, and as many of them shad as can be procured; also Ten thousand Quintals of well cured and dried cod fish.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1770: Stewart Island, New Zealand

One of the artists aboard Captain James Cook's ship *Endeavour* was Sydney Parkinson. On this day they were anchored off Stewart Island, New Zealand, and according to Parkinson, a rather unusual birthday dish was prepared for one of the officers:

[B]eing one of the inferior officers birth day, it was celebrated by a peculiar kind of festival; a dog was killed that had been bred on board; the hind quarters were roasted; and a pye was made of the fore quarters, into the crust of which they put the fat; and of the viscera they made a haggis.

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in Australia:

Mr Roper and John Murphy succeeded in shooting eight cockatoos, which gave us an excellent soup. I found in their stomachs a fruit resembling grains of rice, which was slightly sweet, and would doubtless afford an excellent dish, if obtained in sufficient quantity and boiled.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1669: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

Here, which I never did before, I drank a glass, of a pint I believe, at one draught, of the juice of oranges of whose peel they make comfits, and there they drink the juice as wine, with sugar, and it is very fine drink; but it being new, I was doubtful whether it might not do me hurt.

Sweet oranges are an everyday sight in our shops today but were only just becoming known in England in the mid-seventeenth century. They were known as China oranges to distinguish them from the bitter Seville oranges used in preserves, which had been known for much longer. Pepys made several references to this then expensive luxury in his diary. He mentions buying 4 shilling's worth at 6 pence from an orange-seller at the theater on May 11, 1669.

MARCH 10

FOOD & BOOKS

1879: Britain

The second half of the nineteenth century saw a huge explosion in the publication of cookery books aimed at the middle-class housewife. Many of these books gave suggested menus for each day of the year. One such book was *A Year's Cookery*, by Phyllis Browne. The author addressed her book to "people of moderate income, with moderate domestic help, and ordinary kitchen utensils." She gave a menu for breakfast, luncheon, and dinner for each day, recipes for all the dishes, shopping lists for that day and the day following, instructions for advance preparation, and a daily list of "Things that must not be Forgotten."

For March 10, the recommended menus were as follows:

Breakfast	Luncheon	Dinner
Savoury Eggs	Australian meat cold, with	Skate, with Brown Butter Sauce
Hot Toast	Baked Potatoes	Irish Stew
Dry Toast	Stewed Prunes	Potatoes

Brown and White Bread
and Butter

Wyvern Pudding

Milk Toast

Cheese

The *Australian meat* was canned mutton, purchased in four-pound tins. *Wyvern puddings* are none other than popovers.

Wyvern Puddings

Make some batter two or three hours before dinner time. Grease some patty pans, pour a little of the batter into each, and bake in a quick oven. Turn the puddings out of the tins, put a little jam on each, and serve.

The marketing list for ingredients ready for the next day was as follows: “A tin of sardines; Four Sheeps’ Kidneys, fine, plump, and perfectly fresh; half a pound of bacon (if not in the house); one tin of preserved tomatoes; muffins.”

The things not to be forgotten were as follows:

1. Turn the beef in the brine [a piece of silverside; the pickling process started on March 5, for a future meal].
2. Take care of the fat cut from the neck of mutton [the scrag end of a neck of mutton, to have been purchased “if it seems as though there would not be enough mutton for dinner; it can be rendered down for frying purposes”].
3. Before serving the Australian meat, carefully pick off the fat (to be melted down for frying (and take away the jelly, which will be a valuable addition to stock or gravy).

MARMALADE

1495: London, England

The first recorded shipment of marmalade arrived in England aboard a

Portuguese ship on this day. The “six pec [pieces] marmelad” that arrived on this day were very different, however, from the citrus breakfast conserve that we now call marmalade. The word *marmalade* comes from the Portuguese *marmelo*, for quince, and this shipment would have been of a firm, dry fruit paste in the form of blocks or tablets, made from quinces. The word gradually came to be used for fruit pastes made from other ingredients, such as apples or damsons, and eventually to the form familiar to us today.

How to make the Marmalat of Quinces of Orleans

Take fifteen pounds of Quinces, three pounds of sugar, and two quarts of water, boil all together; after it is well sod, pass it by little and little through a napkin, and take out of it what you can; then put your decoction in a bason with four pounds of sugar, seeth it, for to know when it is enough, trie it on a plate, and when it doth come off, take it quickly from the fire, and set it up in boxes, or somewhere else.

—*The French Cook* (1653), by La Varenne

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1661: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys: “Dined at home on a poor Lenten dinner of Coleworts and bacon.”

Coleworts was a general term for members of the cabbage family. Cabbage cooked with bacon has been a popular combination for centuries. Bacon was not strictly allowable in Lent, of course, but Pepys was not scrupulously observant.

1666: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys: “[A]nd so home to dinner with my wire to a good hog’s harslet, a piece of meat I love but have not eat of I think this seven year.”

Harslet or *haslet* is a broadly applied term referring to offal, especially from a pig, and often specifically to a piece cooked by roasting. It is also used to apply to a meat loaf-type dish made from offal.

Pigs' Harslet

Wash and dry some liver, sweetbreads, and fat and lean bits of pork, beating the latter with a rolling-pin to make it tender: season with pepper, salt, sage, and a little onion shred fine; when mixed, put all into a cawl, and fasten it up tight with a needle and thread. Roast it on a hanging jack, or by a string.

Serve with a sauce of port-wine and water, and mustard, just boiled up, and put into a dish. Or serve in slices, with parsley, for a fry.

—*A New System of Domestic Cookery: Formed Upon Principles of Economy* (1824), by Maria Eliza Ketelby Rundell

MARCH 11

PENNY LOAF DAY

1643: England

The town of Newark-on-Trent in Nottinghamshire, England, was a Royalist stronghold during the English Civil War (1642–1651). On the night of March 11, 1643, a wealthy resident of the town called Hercules Clay dreamed three times that his house was on fire, and believing this to be an omen, he and his family fled their home. Shortly afterwards, a bomb fired by the Roundheads and intended for the governor's residence (believed to be the Royalist headquarters) hit and destroyed Clay's house. In thanks for his miraculous escape, Clay left two bequests to the town: £100 to pay for a sermon every year in Mary Magdalene's church, and the same to fund a dole of "penny loaves" for the poor on this day. The service and dole still continue, albeit in modified form, to this day.

A DEHYDRATED DINNER

1943: USA, World War II



Dehydrated dinner

(Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division [Reproduction number e.g., LC-USE6-D-010084])

A luncheon prepared from dehydrated food was served to 750 guests at the Hotel Statler in Washington, DC. Guests at the dinner were told that dehydrating food would save 50 percent of shipping space, which was needed for military use.

The event was to commemorate the second anniversary of the signing of An Act to Further Promote the Defense of the United States (commonly referred to as the Lend-Lease Agreement), by which the United States agreed to supply the Allied nations with foodstuffs and other supplies between 1941 and 1945.

The luncheon menu consisted of soya soup, meat loaf, beets, cabbage, carrots, potatoes, cranberries, army biscuits, custard, cheese, and milk.

FOOD & WAR

1811: France, Napoleonic Wars

The long-standing British blockade of Continental ports had seriously affected the sugar supply, and Napoleon Bonaparte's response had been to offer substantial rewards and incentives for the development of alternative sources. By this date he was able to say:

I am informed that from recent experiments, France will be able to do without sugar from the two Indies. Chemistry has made such progress in this country that it will be possible to produce as great a change in our commercial relations as that produced by the discovery of the compass. . . . The English will be obliged to throw into the Thames the sugars for which they have exchanged the objects of their industry, and which have afforded them such resources.

1940: Britain, World War II

Meat rationing began on this day. Unlike many other foods which were rationed via a points system, meat was rationed by cost. The allowance was 1 shilling and 10 pence (1/10d) at first, but after some fluctuations it went down to 1/2d on July 7, 1941, where it remained for the rest of the war. Cooking fats were rationed in July 1940 as was tea (two ounces), while preserves and cheese were added to the list of rationed goods in March and May 1941.

1946: USA, World War II

As part of the post-war effort to conserve food for the starving populations of Europe in the aftermath of World War II, President Truman initiated the “Eat Less” drive. To assist the American public (especially the housewife), the National Family Emergency Committee produced a list of thirty-nine ways to save food. These included using thinner slices of bread, making open sandwiches, and making single-rather than double-crust pies.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1835: England

William Newton, civil engineer, received a patent for “a method of preparing animal milk, and bringing it into such a state as shall allow of it being preserved for any length of time, with its nutritive properties, and capable of being transported to any climate, for domestic or medicinal uses, being a communication from a foreigner residing abroad.”

His invention was essentially a form of sweetened condensed milk, which was put up in bottles or pots, or dried and reduced to powder. It could be mixed with

cocoa and then dried into cakes to form a milky cocoa mix.

1975: USA

Ruth M. Siems, a home economist at General Foods (now owned by Kraft Foods) received Patent No. 3870803 for “Instant Stuffing Mix.” This patent was allocated to the category

Prepared from dried yeast-leavened corn bread crumb or a mixture of dried yeast-leavened white bread crumb and a member selected from the group consisting of dried yeast-leavened whole wheat bread crumb, corn bread crumb and mixtures thereof.

FREEDOM FRIES

2003: USA

Congressman Robert W. Ney, with the authority of his position as chairman of the Committee on House Administration, ordered that henceforth, on the menus of the restaurants and snack bars run by the House of Representatives, “French Fries” would be known as “Freedom Fries,” and “French Toast” as “Freedom Toast.” This, Congressman Ney said, was “a small but symbolic effort to show the strong displeasure of many on Capitol Hill with the actions of our so-called ally, France.” Apparently the only response from the French embassy was to note that french fries are, in fact, Belgian, and that “[w]e are at a very serious moment dealing with very serious issues and we are not focusing on the name you give to potatoes.”

There were precedents for this stance during World War I, when sauerkraut was briefly renamed “liberty cabbage” and hamburgers became “liberty steaks.”

FOOD FIRSTS

1769: England

The first mention in print of the well-known small English pastries known as maids of honour occurred in the *Public Advertiser*. The notice advertised “Almond and Lemon Cheesecakes, Maid of Honour, Sweetmeat Tarts.” A

charming but completely false story of the origin of the name of these small pastries is that they were made by Anne Boleyn when she was maid of honor to the queen, Catherine of Aragon.

Maids of Honour

Take half a pint of sweet curds, beat them well in a marble mortar till they are as smooth as butter. Put in half a pint of cream, the yolks of four eggs, the whites of two, well beaten and strained through a sieve; a quarter of a pound of fresh butter melted, a little grated lemon-peel, and nutmeg, one ounce of candied citron shred very fine, a glass of brandy, and a spoonful of orange flower water; sweeten it to your palate with powder sugar, mix the ingredients all well together, have your patty pans very small, sprinkle on a little flour, put a thin puff-paste over them, more than half fill them, and bake them in a moderate oven.

—*The New Art of Cookery, According to the Present Practice* (1792), by Richard Briggs

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1554: Italy

From the diary of Jacopo Carrucci da Pontormo (1494–1557), an Italian Mannerist painter:

On the 11th of March 1554, on Sunday morning, I ate lunch with Bronzino—chicken and veal—and felt well (it is true that I was in bed when he came for me at home. It was quite late and upon getting up I felt swollen and full. It was a very beautiful day). In the evening I ate a bit of roasted dry meat which made me thirsty.

1882: Holland

Vincent van Gogh wrote to his brother Theo:

And another thing touched me—very, very deeply. I had told the model not to come today—I didn't say why, but nevertheless the poor woman came, and I protested. "Yes, but I have not come to pose—I just came to see if

you had something for dinner.” She had brought me a dish of beans and potatoes. There are things that make life worth living after all.

MARCH 12

SAINT GREGORY THE GREAT DAY

This was the traditional day to sow onions in Lancashire, England. Another very local custom relating to Gregory’s day is described in a book of English customs written in 1842:

Amongst other directions in the will of William Clapham, bearing the date 5th July, 1603, is that the sum of four shillings and four pence should be yearly bestowed towards a potation amongst the poor scholars of the Freeschool in Giggleswick [in Yorkshire] on St. Gregory’s Day. The Commissioners report that they found a custom formerly prevailed of giving figs, bread and ale, among the scholars on that day; and that at present there is amongst them on the same day of bread and figs, to an amount considerably exceeding the sum of four shillings and four pence per annum.

Fig at this time, especially in this context, generally referred to raisins, not to the fruit of the *Ficus carica*.

FOOD & POLITICS

1962: Cuba

Law no. 1015, which instituted the rationing system in Cuba, came into force on this day. The system is called the *Libreta de Abastecimiento* (Supplies Booklet). Families are provided with a small booklet each year which records the number of persons and their age and gender (as ration product and amount depend on these) at the registered address. Supplies can only be obtained from specific stores determined by the address. The system was originally intended to be temporary.

Most food items have been regulated in this system, although the exact items and amounts have fluctuated depending on supplies. Supplies such as soap and toothpaste were also restricted, but the initial food shortages were so fierce that

tooupaste were also restricted, but the initial food quotas were as follows:

- 2 pounds of cooking grease, whether oil or pork lard, per person per month.
- 13 ½ pounds of beans of any type, garbanzo, split peas, or lentils per person over 9 months, to be distributed monthly.
- 6 pounds of rice per person per month.
- ¾ pound of beef per person per week.
- 1 chicken (2 net pounds) per person per month.
- ½ pound of fish, clean, per person each 15 days.
- 5 eggs per person per month.
- 3 ½ pounds of viands per week per person depending on the season.
- 2 additional pounds of malanga weekly per child under 7 years old.
- ⅛ 8 pound of butter per person per month.
- 1 a litter of milk daily per each child under 7 and one liter daily for each 5 persons over 7 or the equivalent of 6 cans of either condensed or evaporated milk.

FOOD & THE LAW

1266: England

The first English food law was enacted on this day, in the time of King John. At that time, bread and ale were the staple foods of every class, and all authorities recognized the importance of ensuring that they were safe and of good quality.

The *Assisia Panis & Cervisiæ* (Assize of Bread and Ale) regulated the price, weight, and quality of bread and ale, with the prices of all being determined by the price of corn (generally meaning grain at this time). The act also prohibited the adulteration of bread—a very common practice at the time and for centuries

afterward.

The act remained in force until 1822, when it was superseded by the Bread Act of 1822.

1366: France

Letters patent issued by King Charles V decreed that suburban bakers could bring their bread into Paris for sale only on the regular market days and sell it only in the market place. The decree also stipulated that the loaves sold by them must be of a uniform weight, form, and flour, at a price of 2 or 4 deniers, and that the bakers themselves must retail the bread; they could not act as wholesale bread suppliers. Finally, once they had taken their bread to the market, they could not take any unsold bread away with them but were obliged to sell it for whatever they could get.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

1561: London, England

A fish-seller accused of selling “young fry” (fish which were undersize or underage) was punished on this day according to the prevailing ideas about such things. In medieval times, sentences were frequently tweaked to fit the particular crime, and the public was alerted to the offender and offence (and the offender soundly humiliated) by the very public nature of the punishment.

In this case, the fish-woman was garlanded with the illegal fish, as was the horse she was placed on, and she was paraded around the town:

The xxij day of Marche dyd a woman ryd a-bowt Chepesyd and London for bryngyng yonge frye of dyvers kynd of fysse unlafull, with a garland a-pone her hed hangyng with strynges of the small fysse, and on the horse a-for and be-hynd here, led by on of the bedylls of Brydwell.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1841: USA

Orlando Jones of England received U.S. Patent No. 2,000 for his “Improvement in the Manufacture of Starch.” His invention referred to edible starch such as cornstarch. His patent specifications said:

What I claim as my invention is, first, the mode of treating or operating on farinaceous matters to obtain starch and other products, especially flour or powder produced from rice, and in the manufacture of starch, by submitting farinaceous matters to a process or processes of caustic alkaline treatment, as herein described; and secondly I claim the mode of manufacturing starch from rice by the process or processes herein described.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1555: Italy

From the diary of painter Jacopo Carrucci da Pontormo. His diary entries show his concern with his diet and his particular dislike (fear, perhaps) of overeating: “On Saturday I dined with Piero, fish from the Arno, ricotta, eggs and artichokes. I ate far too much, especially ricotta. Then next day to lunch with Bronzino but no room for any supper, just my luck to overeat.”

1739: Shalstone House, Buckinghamshire, England

The widowed Elizabeth Purefoy wrote to her London agent on this day about a gift of fish she had received:

We . . . received your kind present of a codling & oysters; the codling was very good, but the Oysters, half of them were black as Ink and the other half was poisoned with the stench, for they were all of a ffroth & your ffishmonger should give you your money again.

MARCH 13

SELF-RISING FLOUR

1845: England

Henry Jones, baker, was granted royal letters patent for his invention of self-

rising flour. In his patent specifications he said:

I declare the nature of my said invention to consist in mixing with the said flour such acids and carbonated alkalis or carbonated alkaline earths, and sugar, and salt, all in a finely-powdered and dry state as will, when the flour is made into bread or biscuits or other the like baked food, flavour the same, and cause the dough to rise as required without the use of any fermenting matter.

In 1849, Jones received a U.S. patent for his flour.

An advertisement for his product appeared in the medical journal *The Lancet* of September 13 that year, along with a testimonial from the Admiralty.

IMPORTANT INVENTION

Approved of by the Lords of the Admiralty and eminent Medical and Naval

Authorities,—by Royal Letters Patent.

PREPARED FLOUR, for making Bread at Sea, &c., by the addition of water only. Manufactured by the patentee, HENRY JONES, 36 and 37, Broadmead, Bristol. By the use of this flour, captains, passengers to India, &c., may have fresh bread daily through the longest voyage; it is made in two or three minutes, and will be found far superior to that by the ordinary mode. Sold in cases, (containing 14lb,) 4s 6d.; (20 lb,) 6s 6d; sample cases, 1s 6d each, forwarded to any part, on receipt of a post-office letter.

(Copy of a Letter from the Board of Admiralty, London):-

“Sir,—With reference to your letter of the 27th ult., relative to your Patent Prepared Flour, from the use of which nautical men may have fresh bread, daily, during long voyages, I have to acquaint you, that their Lordships have tried the flour made into bread, which they find to be perfectly good, and wish to know whether your patent can be applied to the flour manufactured in the victualling establishments. I am, sir, your obedient servant,

William Leyburn, For Comptroller of Victualling.

HENRY VIII'S POULTRY-STUFF

1531: England

The records of the reign King Henry VIII show that on this day some orders were made in respect to the poultry supplies of the household. The following is an extract from the detailed regulations:

Articles ordained at the King's Pallace of Westminster, by the Lord Great Master, Mr. Treasurer, and Mr. Comptroller, and others, the 13th day of March in the 23rd yeare of the Reigne of our Souveraigne Lord King Henry VIII for to be observed by the King's Purveyor for his Mouth of Poultry-Stuff as hereafter ensueth.

ITEM, the said Purveyor shall furnish dayly the proportion given unto him weekly, and that to be good, sweete, and seasonable stuff; and shall bring dayly into the Office of the Poultry by five of the clock in the morning, the said stuff; and in default thereof to loose one Weeke's Wages.

ITEM, in case the said Purveyor shall have his proportion to him delivered in a more ample manner than shall be needfull for the time for serveing of the King and his household, that then she shall returne the said overplus of the said proporcion unto the Wardesn of the Pouterers of London, the King lying within twenty myles of the same. And the said Wardens to be bound in an obligation of 40*l.* to receive the said Stuff, being seasonable, at such prices as the King should have paid for it, in case it should have been expended within the King's household.

FOOD FOR THE POOR

1847: Ireland

Soup kitchens were opened in February 1847, at the height of the potato famine in Ireland. On March 13, 1847, the *Illustrated London News* ran an article about the “benevolent attempts to alleviate the present scarcity” at the Soup Depôt, in Barrack-street, Cork.

It is impossible to overrate the valuable services rendered by the gentlemen who attend here, and undertake the arduous duty of administering the daily rations of food to the famishing and clamorous crowds who beset the gates. The average number supplied every day at this establishment for the past week has been 1300, and many hundreds more apply, whom it is impossible at present to accommodate. The upper gate is opened at twelve o’clock, and eight hundred are admitted, when the tremendous rush which takes place presents fearful evidence of the hunger and misery which the crowd are enduring; on entering, they are classified, and stationed in the order in which it is intended to serve them, in a row of pens or enclosed places under the range of sheds at the right hand, each lot of 100 being in charge of a policeman, to see that each is properly attended to: there is then a communication from the kitchen in the rear, through which the hominy is handed in tins, containing a quart each, with great rapidity, to each person, who then crosses the yard to the sheds at the other side, and there eats his food. The whole 800 are served in about three hours, and are then let out by the lower gate, and a fresh batch of 5 to 600 admitted as before, and fed in the same way. We tasted the food they receive, which is most carefully prepared from rice and Indian meal, well boiled and seasoned, and can safely declare that it is excellent. We would, however, earnestly appeal to the ever active benevolence of the charitable, by suggesting the immense advantage the poor would derive from the addition of a little bread to this description of soup. Even a two-penny loaf per day from one half of the respectable families in Cork, who would not miss ten times its cost, sent to this Depôt, would be of incalculable assistance, and greatly aid the noble exertions of the Committee.

FOOD & WAR

1943: Britain & USA, World War II

American airmen stationed in England invented a novel way of making ice cream in their Boeing B19s—their “Flying Fortresses.” Their method was

described in a *New York Times* article on this day:

United States airmen based on British stations have discovered a handy way of making ice cream. They place prepared ice-cream mixture in a large can and anchor it to the rear-gunner's compartment of a Flying Fortress. It is well shaken up and nicely frozen by flying over enemy territory at high altitudes. Care must be taken to drop bombs and not ice-cream on enemy targets, and to avoid Nazi fighters and anti-aircraft fire. That is all there is too it.

No doubt the airmen were taking their patriotic duty seriously, the secretary of war, having declared ice cream an essential foodstuff. Unfortunately the recipe for the prepared ice cream mix was not included in the article.

CONVICT RATIONS

1788: Australia

The new colony was struggling in the first months after settlement, and rations were reduced on this day:

- 100lb beef to be cut into 28 pieces
- 104lb pork to be cut into 56 pieces
- This means a reduction of 12lb for every 100lb of beef and 8lb for every 100lb of pork

COOKING SCHOOL

1877: New York

Miss Juliet Corson opened the New York Cooking School in St. Mark's Place on this day. The school's mission was to teach "plain cooking to cooks and the daughters and wives of workingmen," and free lessons in kitchen and dining room skills were given to suitable young women and children. The school almost immediately became successful, and ladies of a higher social class began to take an interest. In less than a year, in May 1878, the school became incorporated as a permanent institution.

Juliet Corson became a celebrity, but she never lost her interest in providing advice for those on small budgets. Already by 1877 she had published at her own expense, *Fifteen-Cent Dinners for Workingmen's Families*, which was provided at no cost to working-people earning \$1.50 or less per day.

Table Sauce

There is no reason why you should not sometimes have a nice relish for cold meat when you can make a pint of it for six cents, so I will give a receipt for it. Get at Washington Market, at the herb stand, a bunch of TARRAGON; it will cost five cents in the summer, when it is green and strong, and not much more in the winter; put it in an earthen bowl and put on it one pint of scalding hot vinegar; cover it and let it stand until the next day; then strain it, and put it into a bottle which you must cork tight. Either put more hot vinegar on the tarragon, or dry it, and save it until you want to make more; you can make a gallon of sauce from one bunch, only every time you use it you must let it stand a day longer.

—*Fifteen-Cent Dinners for Workingmen's Families* (1877)

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1668: London, England

The diarist Samuel Pepys made an early reference to the folding of table napkins into fancy shapes:

[M]y head being full of tomorrow's dinner . . . Thence home; and there find one laying of my napkins against tomorrow in figures of all sorts, which is mighty pretty; and it seems it is his trade and gets much money by it, and doth now and then furnish tables with plate and linen for a feast at so much—which is mighty pretty—and a trade I could not have thought of.

MARCH 14

WALDORF SALAD

1893: New York, USA

The Waldorf Hotel opened with a fund-raiser concert by the New York Symphony Orchestra and “society supper” for St. Mary’s Free Hospital for Children. Fifteen hundred people attended. The supper was advertised as a *Mi-Carême* event—that is, a mid-Lenten event at which the usual rules of abstinence (or abstemiousness) were briefly suspended.

Oscar Tschirky, the famous “Oscar of the Waldorf,” was the maître d’hôtel from its opening until he retired in 1943. Tschirky was not a trained chef, although he clearly took a large part in planning meals and developing dishes. It is said that he invented Waldorf salad for the hotel opening supper. In 1896, he authored a cookbook called, very unpretentiously, *The Cook Book*, and he included his recipe for the salad. Interestingly, his version does not contain walnuts, although these are today generally considered to be essential to the classic dish.

Waldorf Salad

Peel two raw apples and cut them into small pieces, say about half an inch square, also cut some celery the same way, and mix it with the apple. Be very careful not to let any seeds of the apples be mixed with it. The salad must be dressed with a good mayonnaise.

FOOD & WAR

1944: Holland, World War II

The teenage Anne Frank wrote about the food situation in her family’s “secret annexe.” It was the fourth year of the war, and they had been in hiding almost two years. The people who brought them food coupons had been caught, so they had little food.

Perhaps it would be entertaining for you—though not in the least for me—to hear what we are going to eat today. As the charwoman is at work downstairs, I’m sitting on the Van Daan’s table at the moment. I have a handkerchief soaked in some good scent (bought before we came here) over my mouth and held against my nose. You won’t gather much from this, so let’s “begin at the beginning.” The people from whom we obtained food coupons have been caught, so we just have our five ration cards and no

extra coupons, and no fats. As both Miep and Koophuis are ill, Elli hasn't time to do any shopping, so the atmosphere is dreary and dejected, and so is the food. From tomorrow we shall not have a scrap of fat, butter, or margarine left. We can't have fried potatoes (to save bread) for breakfast any longer, so we have porridge instead, and as Mrs. Van Daan thinks we're starving, we have brought some full-cream milk "under the counter." Our supper today consists of a hash made from kale which has been preserved in a barrel. Hence the precautionary measure with the handkerchief! It's incredible how kale can stink when it's a year old. The smell in the room is a mixture of bad plums, strong preservatives, and rotten eggs. Ugh! the mere thought of eating that muck makes me feel sick. Added to this, our potatoes are suffering from such peculiar diseases that out of two buckets of pommes de terre, one whole one ends up on the stove. We amuse ourselves by searching for all the different kinds of diseases and have come to the conclusion that they range from cancer and small-pox to measles! Oh, no, it's no joke to be in hiding during the fourth year of the war. If only the whole rotten business were over! Quite honestly, I wouldn't care so much about the food, if only it were more pleasant here in other ways. There's the rub: this tedious existence is beginning to make us all touchy.

ANNIVERSARY

1836: England

This was the birthday of Isabella Beeton, editor of the monumental classic *The Book of Household Management*, which was published by her husband's company in 1861. Isabella died in 1865, at the age of only twenty-nine years, from complications due to the birth of her fourth child.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1898: USA

Lucy Scott was a nineteen-year-old cousin of Lucy Hayes, the wife of President Rutherford B. Hayes. She was sent to stay with them at the White House for her "coming out." The young Lucy wrote regular letters home, and on this day mentions, among other things, black cake:

We reached Fort Foote safely & spent a charming day Lou is very nicely situated & lives delightfully. She had purchased a delicious lunch for us consisting of sweet breads & peas, pickled oysters, fried oysters, crullers, sweet pickles, coffee, tea, sliced oranges, black cake, sandwiches, tongue, ham, *etc.* to which we did full justice.

Black Cake

One pound of flour, one of sugar, fourteen ounces of butter, ten eggs, three pounds of seeded raisins, three pounds of Zante currants, and one pound of citron, a wine glass of wine, one of brandy, and one of milk, a teaspoonful of saleratus, a table-spoonful of molasses, a table-spoonful of cinnamon, a teaspoonful of cloves, a quarter of an ounce of mace, or one nutmeg. The sugar should be the brown kind, and stirred a few minutes with the butter, then the eggs beaten to a froth, and stirred in. Brown the flour in a pan, over a few coals—stir it constantly to prevent its burning. It should be done before you commence making the cake, so as to have it get cold. Stir it into the butter and sugar gradually, then add the molasses and spice. Dissolve the saleratus in the milk, then strain it, and mix it with the brandy and wine, to curdle them—stir the whole into the cake. Just before you put it into the cake pans, stir in the fruit gradually, a handful of each alternately. When well mixed in, put it into cake pans and bake it immediately. If baked in thick loaves, it takes from two hours and a half to three hours to bake it sufficiently. The oven should not be of a furious heat. Black cake cuts the best when three or four weeks old.

—*The American Housewife: Containing the Most Valuable and Original Receipts . . . by an Experienced Lady* (1841)

MARCH 15

CECIL'S FAST

1563: England

The Navigation Act passed on this day contained a controversial clause which mandated Wednesday as an additional “fish day.” The inclusion was the result of a successful campaign by parliamentary member William Cecil, who believed that increasing the consumption of fish would stimulate the fishing industry.

that increasing the consumption of fish would stimulate the fishing industry, which was the main source of experienced seamen for the navy (the men often being forcibly impressed into the service). Cecil argued that the “the navy and mariners have decayed, and on the other side, selling of fish out of the realm hath no present great vent: it must needs follow that the remedies must be sought to increase mariners by fishing, as a cause most natural, easy and perpetual to breed and maintain mariners.” Cecil also presented a detailed argument to convince readers that an additional fish day would not be any great burden to the people. He reminded the House that of the fifty-two Wednesdays in the year, many were already fast days determined by the Church because they fell in Lent or on other holy days, so the number of additional days was thirty-three at most. He ended his argument with the words:

So to conclude, a small number of wealthy, delicate people shall observe this day and yet of them no small number will by licence, or without licence, break it, which may be guessed by the humours of men in this House that are so earnest against it. Now therefore it will follow that comparing the quantity of fish that is likely to be eaten on this Wednesday, being so few days in number, and so many not intending to eat either by licence or by poverty and custom . . . the burden to eat fish will not be great to many.

The bill being passed, Wednesday became known as Cecil’s Fast.

NOT-COFFEE

1865: USA, American Civil War

The Union blockade had serious implications for those in the South who struggled

without their coffee. Newspapers throughout the South published recipes for various substitutes, and on this day the *Southern Banner* (Athens, GA) published the following suggestion:

Nobody has had more occasion to mourn over the blockade than that numerous and highly respectable class, the coffee toppers. Many a one would cheerfully munch his dry crusts at breakfast, if he could wash them down with the cheering beverage which used, in former times, to atone for

the short-comings of cooks and fortify him against a day of vexations. For the stimulating property to which both tea and coffee owe their chief value, there is unfortunately no substitute; the best we can do is to dilute the little stocks which still remain, and cheat the palate, if we cannot deceive the nerves. The best substitute which we have yet found for either tea or coffee, is plenty of good, rich milk, which is at least nutritive, if not stimulating. But alas! the price of butter plainly tells that milk is almost as scarce as coffee, and many persons want something hot to drive off the fogs of the morning. After many unsatisfactory trials of rye, wheat, corn, potatoes, okra, acorns, and almost everything else that can be purchased, we have found in molasses, we will not say a “substitute” for, but an adulteration of coffee, which leaves but little to be desired, *but the stimulus*. Don’t be alarmed, Mr Editor, we are not about to propose “long sweetening.” Molasses when boiled down until it scorches, is converted into an intensely bitter substance, called by chemists caramel. Our method is to put a quart or more of sorghum syrup into any convenient vessel, and stew it down over a slow fire, as if making candy, stirring constantly until the syrup is burnt black; then pour it out into a greased plate to cool. The blackish porous mass thus obtained is pounded, when quite cold, in an iron mortar. We mix it with twice its bulk of ground coffee, and use a teaspoonful of this mixture for each person; thus one teaspoonful of caramel and two of coffee will make six cups of a beverage which, as far as taste is concerned, is far preferable to pure Rio coffee. The burnt molasses or caramel, attracts moisture when exposed to the air, and must, therefore, be kept in a close vessel. It would be well, for the same reason, to prepare it in small quantities. If the molasses is burnt too much, it is reduced to charcoal and loses all taste. By the way, though a very simple matter, many housekeepers do not know that it is perfectly easy to clear coffee by adding a small quantity of cold water, just as it “comes to a boil.”

1876: USA

The Health Food Company of New York announced in the *New York Medical Eclectic* on this day that it would soon be offering for sale: “Cereal Coffee, designed to supersede coffee and tea, for the use of those with whom these substances disagree, and who yet require a warm beverage. This Cereal Coffee contains all the nutritive matter of the grain.”

FOOD & THE LAW

1739: Britain

An Act for Regulating Taverns, Ordinaries, Inn-keepers and Retailers of Strong Liquors, aimed specifically at the American colonies, was promulgated by the British Parliament on this day.

AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED by the Authority aforesaid, That if any Tavern-keeper, Inn-keeper, or Keeper of an Ordinary, at any Time after this Act shall take Place, shall entertain, entice, harbour or keep any Apprentice, white Servant, Indian, Molatto or Negro Servant or Slave, or shall give, or sell any strong Liquors of any Kind, to such Apprentice, Servant or Servants, Slave or Slaves, (knowing or having Reason to suspect or believe them to be such) directly or indirectly, without express Orders, or Leave first obtain'd from the Master or Mistress of such Apprentice, Servant or Slave, shall for the first Offence forfeit the Sum of Twenty Shillings, for the second Offence Forty Shillings, and for every Offence after, shall forfeit Five Pounds, all current Money aforesaid.

2000: Strasbourg, the Chocolate Directive

The European Parliament voted to allow chocolate to be made with up to 5 percent vegetable oil in place of cocoa butter on this day. A dispute had been going on since 1973 when Britain and several other countries won an opt-out from the European Union law which stated that the only fat allowed in chocolate was cocoa butter. Opponents of the new directive estimated that it could represent a loss of \$800 million to West African nations, millions of whose people were dependent on cocoa production for their livelihoods.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

1789: Australia

The first few years of settlement in the new British colony were known as the “starvation years.” Strict rationing regulations were in place, as was harsh punishment for offenders. Captain Collins conducted a court session on this day and dispensed punishment to several men who had stolen bread or flour. George

Bannister was sentenced to fifty lashes for stealing three pounds of flour (his first offense). Peter Hopley was sentenced to twenty-five lashes for stealing a quarter of a pound of bread (although he insisted it was only a crust).

FOOD & WAR

1915: Commission for Relief in Belgium

Herbert Hoover wrote to Gifford Pincho, the CRB representative in Paris, to continue their discussion of the monthly requirements of the needy population of northern France:

Studies of our people indicate we could handle two million French people on supply of thirteen thousand tons wheat, twelve hundred tons beans, five hundred tons bacon, twelve hundred tons rice per month. This implies smaller ration than Belgium and could be managed on subsidy of three hundred thousand pounds per month. We can probably procure enough supplies here in addition to what we have now available; therefore what we want is this money, and in view of critical condition cereal markets we should have the money placed at our disposal at once so as to be able to procure and pay for three months' supply and thereafter three hundred thousand pounds per month in order to provide for the third month forward, this system to continue until we have provided for month of July, that is, March, April, May, June, July, five months, making total one and half million pounds. We have during last two months and in continuance of our work during March depleted our Belgian supplies by an amount equal to three hundred thousand pounds, which I therefore include in above budget, this sum in respect of March.

FOOD BUSINESS

1909: London, England

The American retail magnate Harry Gordon Selfridge opened the flagship store that bears his name on Oxford Street in London, on this day, introducing the British shopper to the first American-style department store.

Selfridge's did not have a "provisions" section among its "hundred or more departments" in 1909, but it did have a very popular fruit and flower department

departments in 1909, but it did have a very popular fruit and flower department which also sold “fruit from far distant lands that seemed to have been picked yesterday; there were strawberries, in their cotton-wool nests, of a perfection that the cleverest grower could hardly expect to attain in July.”

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1840: Australia

Mary Thomas was one of the first free settlers in Adelaide, South Australia, when she arrived in 1836. Her brother in England had sent her some of the food she missed from home—a journey that would have taken four months or more: “We have received the bacon and hams, and excellent they are: such a treat as I, at least, have not had since I have been in the colony. The cracknels were as fresh as if they were just out of the oven, but the pot of honey, I am sorry to say, was broken.”

Cracknels in this context meant thin, crisp biscuits (cookies), usually curved or bowl-shaped—not crisp-cooked pork rinds. They have been known in England since at least the mid-fifteenth century, and the basic recipe is still the same. Here is one version, flavored with coriander seed, from the mid-seventeenth century.

To make Cracknels

Take halfe a pound of fine flower, dried and searced [sifted], as much fine sugar searced, mingled with a spoonful of Coriander-seed bruised, halfe a quarter of a pound of butter rubbed in the flower and sugar, then wet it with they yolks of two Eggs, and halfe a spoonful of white Rose-water, a spoonful or a little more of Cream as will wet it; knead the Past [pastry] till it be soft and limber to rowle well, then rowle it extremely thin, and cut them round by little plates; lay them on buttered papers, and when they goe into the Oven, prick them and wash the Top with the yolk of an Egg beaten, and made thin with Rose-water or faire-water; they will give with keeping, therefore before they are eaten they must be dried in a warme Oven to make them crisp.

—*The Compleat Cook* (1658), by W. M.

MARCH 16

SAINT URHO'S DAY

Minnesota, USA

Saint Urho is a saint invented in the mid-1950s by Finnish Americans in Minnesota. The fiction is based on the story of Saint Patrick of Ireland. According to the story, Saint Urho (whose name means “hero”) is credited with driving the grasshoppers out of Finland, as Saint Patrick supposedly drove the snakes from Ireland, Urho thereby saving the wine crop. Finland, of course, does not have vineyards, but nevertheless the supporters of Saint Urho wear green and purple and drink grape juice on the day.

LIQUOR LAW

1915: France

The sale of absinthe was banned. Absinthe is a high-alcohol-content liqueur containing wormwood. Wormwood contains small amounts of thujone—the active ingredient in marijuana. The drink which the *New York Times* called “the most pernicious and treacherously fascinating of all alcoholic stimulants” was also known as “the Green Fairy” and was strongly associated with artistic life—Lautrec, van Gogh, Degas, Manet, and Picasso were known to favor it.

Regular heavy drinkers of absinthe were known to be at risk of hallucinations, convulsions, and severe mental problems. It is now believed that the large amount of alcohol itself, not the thujone, was responsible, but in the early twentieth century absinthe itself was thought responsible. In 1905 in France, a man called Jean Lanfray shot his pregnant wife and two daughters but failed to kill himself after consuming a huge amount of alcohol in various forms. Absinthe got the blame for the tragedy, and the government could not ignore the huge public outcry. The drink was banned in France, and other countries followed. The ban stayed in place for ninety-six years until it was lifted in April 2011.

FOOD LAW

1993: France

Ostrich meat was officially declared fit for human consumption in France on this day. The decrease in popularity of beef since the awareness of “mad cow disease” was a trigger to its acceptance.

1999: Europe

The European Court of Justice annulled a decision of the European Commission that the denomination *feta* was reserved exclusively for Greek cheese. Denmark, Germany, and France had appealed the decision, arguing that the name “feta” was generic and did not therefore qualify for PDO status. The Court determined that the commission had erred in failing to consider all criteria for this designation in this case.

AMERICAN COLONIAL HISTORY

1629: Massachusetts, America

An entry on this date in the Massachusetts Bay Colony’s Memorandum gave a list of seeds and other items to be requested from England. The list included

Wheat, rye, barley, oats, a hogshhead of each in the ear; beans, pease, stones of all sorts of fruits, as peaches, plums, filberts, cherries; pear, apple, quince kernels; pomegranates, woad seed, saffron heads, liquorice seed, . . . potatoes, hop roots, hemp seed, flax seed, against winter, coneys [rabbits], currant plants, tame turkeys.

1806: Australia

The *Government Gazette* noted that James Squire had been awarded a cow from the governor’s herd in reward for his efforts in growing hops and developing the brewing industry in the new colony.

REAL ALE

1971: Britain

The Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) was formed in response to what some British beer lovers perceived as the large-scale commercialization of the industry and the disappearance of “real ale.” The mission of the organization is to persuade drinkers to insist on real ale, publicans to stock it, and brewers to produce it. CAMRA has been instrumental in resurrecting the beer-brewing industry and the huge increase in boutique beers.

GENETICALLY MODIFIED FOODS

1999: Britain

The popular supermarket chain Marks & Spencer took all GM foods off its shelves and announced that all its own brands would remain GM free. The action was in response to customer concern about the potential dangers of GM food.

Genetic engineering is used to increase shelf life, to make food pesticide resistant and allow increased pesticide use, to alter the nature of some oils, and to increase size, productivity (milk production), and fertility in farm animals. Many individuals and consumer groups feel that the long-term effects of this sort of manipulation have not been thoroughly investigated.

FOOD FIRSTS

1897: Boston, Massachusetts, USA

An early, perhaps the earliest, printed recipe for chocolate mousse appeared in the Housekeeper’s Column of the *Boston Daily Globe* on this day. The result is more like a custard than the modern concept of a light and fluffy textured dish.

Chocolate Mousse

Take four strips of chocolate, 1 quart of milk, 6 eggs and 1 tablespoon of cornstarch, dissolve the chocolate in a little warm milk, put the quart of milk on to boil and stir in the chocolate gradually. Set the saucepan where it will cook slowly. Beat the eggs well, mix in the cornstarch and add to the milk and chocolate. Sweeten to taste and boil gently until smooth and thick, stirring until done. Flavor with vanilla and pour into a glass dish. Serve cold with sweetened whipped cream heaped upon it.

A LETTER ON CORPULENCE

1878: England

William Banting, a London undertaker, died on this day (born 1796). His name entered the language as a synonym for the treatment of obesity by abstinence from sugar and starch on account of his own battle with his weight.

By the age of sixty Banting had become so fat that he had to walk down stairs backward, and “with every exertion puffed and blowed in a way that was unseemingly and disagreeable.” He sought much information and advice on his problem and became intrigued by the work of surgeon William Harvey, who had studied the metabolism of glucose by the liver. Banting developed his own high-protein, low-carbohydrate diet and in less than a year had lost forty-six pounds and declared himself cured and on a “tramway of happiness.”

In May 1863, he published a short essay on his experience called *A Letter on Corpulence, Addressed to the Public*. It was enthusiastically received, and the first nationwide diet craze quickly followed.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1554: Italy

From the diary of painter Jacopo Carrucci da Pontormo: “Friday evening beet salad and a pancake of two eggs.”

MARCH 17

BACCHANALIA AND LIBERALIA

The ancient Romans honored Bacchus (Dionysius in Greece), the god of wine and wine-drinking, on this day. It was originally a religious celebration, but eventually it became so wild and orgiastic that it was banned in 186 BCE in a decree entitled *Senatus auctoritas de Bacchanalibus*.

The festival was essentially replaced by Liberalia, the day in which boys who

had come of age assumed the *toga virilis* of adult males. *Frictilia*, or fritters made from flour and honey and fried in pork fat, were sold in the streets by older women with ivy woven through their hair and were offered on small altars.

SAINT PATRICK'S DAY

Saint Patrick is the patron saint of Ireland, and his feast day is celebrated throughout the world by people of Irish heritage. The day often falls during Lent, but in previous times all Lenten abstinences were temporarily suspended for the day. As is well known, the chief activity of the day is the drinking of alcohol, and at one time those who had given up the bottle were also given a day of dispensation to drink from the *pota Phadraig* ("Patrick's Pot," a glass of Irish whisky). The ritual drinking is sometimes called "drowning the shamrock" because of the custom of floating a shamrock leaf in the whiskey before taking a draught.

SAINT GERTRUDE OF NIVELLES'S DAY

The seventh-century Belgian Benedictine abbess Gertrude of Nivelles is a patron saint of travellers. In Belgium, to be offered "Saint Gertrude's cup" is to be offered a final drink, or "one for the road."

WINE AUCTION

1709: London, England

Joseph Addison, the English writer and politician, returned from a visit to Italy to find a gift awaiting him:

Sheer-Lane, March 17.

Upon my coming home last night, I found a very handsome present of wine left for me, as a taste of 216 hogsheads which are to be put to sale at 20/. a hogshead, at Garraway's Coffee-house, in Exchange-Alley, on the 22d instant, at three in the afternoon, and to be tasted in Major Long's vaults from the 20th instant till the time of sale. This having been sent to me with a desire that I would give my judgment upon it, I immediately impanelled a jury of men of nice palates and strong heads, who being all of them very scrupulous and unwilling to proceed rashly in a matter of so great

scrupulous, and unwilling to proceed rashly in a matter of so great importance, refused to bring in their verdict till three in the morning; at which time the foreman pronounced, as well as he was able, Extra - a - ordinary French claret. For my own part, as I love to consult my pillow in all points of moment, I slept upon it before I would give my sentence, and this morning confirmed the verdict.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

1818: England

Adulteration of foodstuffs was widespread in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but the authorities did their best to keep up with the practices and to find and prosecute the practitioners.

Mr. Chaloner, a dealer in tea and coffee, was charged on the oaths of Charles Henry Lord and John Pearson, both Excise-officers, with having in his possession, on the 17th of March, nine pounds of spurious coffee, consisting of burnt pease, beans, and gravel or sand, and a portion of coffee, and with selling some of the same; also with having in his possession seventeen pounds of vegetable powder, and an article imitating coffee, which contained not a particle of genuine coffee.

The defendant was convicted in the penalty of £90.

FOOD BUSINESS

1956: Philadelphia

James and William Conway founded the Mr. Softee ice cream company. They put a large freezing machine into a truck and, it being Saint Patrick's Day, gave away green ice cream. The company now has more than six hundred trucks in fifteen states.

FOOD & RELIGION

1542: England

At the Convocation of the Province of Canterbury Archbishon Cranmer and his

At the Convocation of the Province of Canterbury, Archbishop Cranmer and his bishops set in place legislation to control the number of dishes and courses in episcopal meals. The legislation was in response to the perception of excess and even decadence within the ranks of the clergy, and presumably also in spite of the knowledge that sumptuary laws throughout history had proven unenforceable.

In the year of Our Lord MDXLI It was agreed and condescended upon, as well by the common consent of both the Archbishops and most part of the Bishops within this realm of England, as also of divers grave men at that time, both deans and arch, deacons, the fare at their tables to be thus moderated: FIRST that the Archbishop should never exceed six divers kinds of flesh or six of fish on the fish days: the Bishop not to exceed five, the Dean and Archdeacon not above four. and all other under that degree not above three: PROVIDED ALSO that the Archbishop might have of second dishes four. the Bishop three and all others under the degree of Bishop but two, as custard, tart, fritter, cheese, or apples, pears, or two of other kinds of fruits: PROVIDED ALSO that if any of the inferior degree should receive at their table any Archbishop, Bishop, Dean or Archdeacon, or any of the laity of like degree, viz. Duke. Marquis, Earl, Viscount, Baron, Lord, Knight, they might have such provision as were meet and requisite for their degrees.

FOOD & WAR

1941: Britain, World War II, “Fair-Share Rationing”

The ration for “sweet bread spreads” such as jam, marmalade, treacle, and syrup was set at eight ounces per week for children and adults as of this day. This was the first rationing order for “non-essential” foods and was intended to ensure fair distribution.

The items were rationed “as a group . . . with the customer’s preference being met as far as possible.” Some logistical problems related to jam usually being available in one-pound jars were overcome by initially allowing families to purchase two month’s supply at one time. Families and individuals had to register with a specific retailer, and it was determined that “as a reward for good behaviour, registered customers will be able at the end of each month to obtain a share of any surplus remaining in the hands of their retailer.”

1941: Japan, World War II

It was announced on this day that as of April 1, rice would be rationed in Japan's six major urban areas. The amount of rice allowed was to vary, laborers being entitled to more than office workers, but all would receive less than they were accustomed. The reason given for the program was that it was to eliminate the illegal speculation in rice that had been occurring. By February 1942, rice rationing was extended nationwide.

The situation became more difficult almost immediately. From April 18, Japan was to have four meatless days a month. It had been impossible to buy pork in Tokyo for weeks, although there did not appear to be a shortage of beef.

THE POTATO

1849

Professor Mulder in *Scientific American* on this day said of the potato and of the Irish who depended upon it, "As an article of food . . . this tuber is not nourishing, and is the cause of the moral and physical degradation of the nation who makes use of it."

It was commonly held by the English at the time that the potato was responsible for the fecundity, laziness, and poverty of the Irish peasant. To the Protestant authorities of the time the apparent aphrodisiac effect was a strike against the potato—already in disfavor because it was not mentioned in the bible. A family could be fed from the potato crop grown easily on a small plot of land, and this was the justification for the belief that the Irish were lazy, unmotivated, and therefore poor. This attitude was evident a century before Professor Mulder's pronouncement. By 1733 the potato was a novelty for some, and the English seedsman Stephen Switzer wrote that potatoes were "an exceedingly useful and delightful food, not only for the vulgar, but also for the tables of the curious . . . which was heretofore reckon'd a food fit only for Irishmen, and clowns, is now become the diet of the most luxuriously polite."

Recipes for potato dishes were still very uncommon in cookery books of the mid-eighteenth century, but William Ellis did include a few in his book *The Country Housewife's Family Companion* in 1750. Here we see again the

connection with Ireland in a dish we would now call *colcannon*.

Another Irish Country Dish

Boil potatoes and parsnips till they are soft, make them into a mash with some new milk, and add a cabbage boiled tender and cut very small; mix the whole well over the fire with store of good butter, some salt and pepper, and eat it hot.

DINNER FOR 4½ PENCE

1900: England

The *News of the World* ran an article about the 4½ penny dinner attended by the Princess of Wales, who had set up a trust to establish dining rooms for workers in the city.

A touching incident, simple in its character, but invested with almost historical interest, has marked the opening of the poor men's restaurants which the Princess of Wales has succeeded in establishing in London. . . . At noon on Wednesday the Prince and Princess of Wales [made a] surprise visit to the Alexandra Restaurant. Luncheon tickets were bought in the ordinary way at 4 ½ d. each. Whilst thousands of toilers, workmen, factory girls, shopboys, and needy clerks were consuming the luncheon provided in the big dining halls, the Royal visitors sat down to a similar meal in an adjoining room. . . . Three courses were served. . . .

The menu: Soup: Clear Vegetable; Entrée Roast Mutton (with Cabbage and Boiled Potatoes); Sweets: Plum Pudding.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1774: Easter Island

Captain James Cook, aboard HMS *Resolution* on his second voyage, stayed at Easter Island for four days. It was the third visit by Europeans to the island. He wrote in his journal:

No Nation will ever contend for the honour of the discovery of Easter Island as there is hardly an Island in this sea which affords less refreshments, and conveniences for Shipping than it does. Nature has hardly provided it with any thing fit for man to eat or drink, and as the Natives are but few and may be supposed to plant no more than sufficient for themselves, they cannot have much to spare to new comers. The produce is Potatoes, Yams, Taro or the Edoy root, Plantains and Sugar Cane, all excellent in its kind, the Potatoes are the best of the sort I ever tasted; they have also Gourds and the same sort of Cloth Plant as at the other isles but not much, Cocks and Hens like ours which are small and but few of them and these are the only domestick Animals we saw among them, nor did we see any quadrupedes, but rats which I believe they eat as I saw a man with some in his hand which he seem'd unwilling to part with.

MARCH 18

THE POTATO

1663: London, England

A letter from Mr. Buckland, “a gentleman from Somersetshire,” was read at a meeting of the Royal Society on this day. Mr. Buckland recommended the planting of potatoes throughout England, which made him a man a long way ahead of his time. The potato (A New World plant) did not make significant progress against the prejudice which attached to it for another hundred years, and it did not start to become popular until the nineteenth century.

A committee appointed to consider Mr. Buckland’s proposal met two days later, when it was resolved that:

1. All those members of the Society, as have land, should be desired to begin the planting of this root, and to persuade their friends to do the same.
2. That in order thereunto, Mr Buckland should be desired to send up what quantity he could of smaller Potato’s, to furnish those that have conveniency to plant them . . .

3. That Mr. Evelyn should be desired to insert this proposition and the approbation thereof, together with the management of planting and spreading them, into the Treatise, which he is now publishing by order of the Society concerning the planting of Trees.
4. That provision being made of these roots, the way of usefulness of planting them should be further published and recommended to the Nation, in the Diurnalls, without naming the Society in it, and therein direction should be given to certain places, where they may be had for those, that have a mind to plant them.

IKE'S SOUP

1954: USA

The *Marion Sentinel* in Linn County, Ohio, published President Eisenhower's recipe for soup. His instructions are lengthy, and begin thus:

The best time to make vegetable soup is a day or so after you have fried chicken and out of which you have saved the necks, ribs, backs, uncooked. (The chicken is not essential, but does add something.)

Procure from the meat market a good beef soup bone—the bigger the better. It is a rather good idea to have it split down the middle so that all the marrow is exposed. I frequently buy, in addition, a couple pounds of ordinary soup meat, either beef or mutton, or both.

Put all this meat, early in the morning, in a big kettle. The best kind is heavy aluminum, but a good iron pot will do almost as well. Put in also the bony parts of the chicken you have saved. Cover it with water, something on the order of 5 quarts. Add a teaspoon of salt, a bit of black pepper and, if you like, a touch of garlic (one small piece). If you don't like garlic, put in an onion. Boil all this slowly all day long. Keep on boiling till the meat has literally dropped off the bone. If your stock boils down during the day, add enough water from time to time to keep the meat covered. When the whole thing has practically disintegrated, pour out into another large kettle through the colander. Make sure that the marrow is out of the bones. I advise you let this strain through the colander for quite a while as much juice will drain out of the meat. (Shake the colander well to help get out all

the juice.)

I usually save a few of the better pieces of meat to be diced and put into the soup after it is done. The rest of it can be given to your dogs or your neighbor's chickens. Put the kettle containing the stock you now have in a very cool place, outdoors in the winter time or in the ice box; let it stand all night and the next day until you are ready to make your soup.

Ike then advised the congealed fat be taken off, some barley cooked separately, and then vegetables added according to taste and availability (and added progressively depending on their cooking times):

The things I like to put in my soup are as follows:

- 1 quart of canned tomatoes
- ½ teacupful of fresh peas. If you can't get peas, a handful of good green beans cut up very small can substitute.
- 2 normal sized potatoes, diced into cubes of about half-inch size
- 2 or 3 branches of good celery
- A good-sized onion (sliced)
- 3 nice-sized carrots diced about the same size as the potatoes
- 1 turnip cut like the potatoes
- ½ cup of canned corn
- A handful of raw cabbage cut up in small pieces.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

1552: England

The penalty for eating flesh on a "fyshe day" was severe—and very public—in the sixteenth century. A "wyfe of Hammersmith" and her customer were made to ride around the city markets with various parts of the pig hung about their head and necks.

HEAD AND NECKS.

The 18 day of March [1552] a wyfe of Hammersmith brought two pigges to London to a carpenter dwelling in Smythfeild, which was taken contrary to a proclamation for eating of fleshe in Lent, and by judgement of my Lord Mayor and Aldermen, they did ryde on 2 horses with panelles of strawe about the markettes of the Citie, havinge eche of them garland on theyr heads of the pyges pettie toes, and a pygge hanging on each of theyr breasts afore them.

FOOD & WAR

1863: USA, American Civil War

The South was suffering shortages due to the Union blockade, and bread riots had occurred in a number of places. In Salisbury, North Carolina, on this day, when the women's demands for bread were again not met, a hungry and angry crowd broke into the stores with hatchets and took thirteen barrels of flour, one of molasses, two sacks of salt, and some cash. They continued onto the Confederate government stores and took ten more barrels of flour.

1917: England, World War I

The *Weekly Dispatch* reported a breach of the wartime food regulations:

For refusing to sell potatoes unless other vegetables were purchased at the same time, Patrick Quill, a greengrocer, of Brook-street, Ratcliff, was cautioned yesterday at the Thames Police Court. Potatoes were the only things on which he made a profit, he protested.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1554: Italy

From the diary of painter Jacopo Carrucci da Pontorno: "Sunday evening, it was Palm Sunday, some cooked mutton and some salad and had to eat bread for three cents."

1664: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys. It was the day of his brother's funeral.

Their service [food at the wake, after the burial] was six biscuits a-piece and what they pleased of burnt claret—my Cosen Joyce Norton kept the wine and cakes above—and did give out to them that served, who had white gloves given them. . . . and saw my poor brother laid into the grave; and so all broke up and I and my wife and Madam Turner and her family to my brother's and by and by fell to a barrel of oysters, Cake, and cheese of Mr. Honiwoods . . . but Lord, to see how the world makes nothing of the memory of a man an hour after he is dead.

MARCH 19

SAINT JOSEPH'S DAY

Saint Joseph (*Guiseppe*) is a favorite saint in Italy. Local communities make the most of

the temporary lifting of the Lenten restrictions, and there are many regional food traditions.

In Sicily, housewives aim to make one hundred dishes, and many of them are sweet. In Salemi, traditionally the first dish is three orange sections sprinkled with sugar, and the last is always *pasta con la mollica*—spaghetti sauted with garlic, a pinch of sugar, cinnamon, and bread crumbs. Each dish contains three pieces of food—one for each member of the Holy Family—and in some areas, each basic ingredient (fish, vegetable, etc.) is prepared in three different ways.

A traditional dish that acknowledges the season is a stew called *maccu di San Giuseppe*. It is made from everything remaining in the pantry, leaving it ready to receive the imminent new crop of spring vegetables.

MAUNDY THURSDAY

1572: England

Queen Elizabeth I, attended by the yeoman of the guard, celebrated the tradition of the Maundy at Greenwich Palace. The day preceding Good Friday in the Christian calendar is known as Maundy Thursday. Traditionally on this day the monarch dispensed *maunds* or alms to poor folk—the number of recipients being equal to the number of years of the monarch’s age. Until the time of James II (1633–1701) part of the proceedings of the day included the ceremonial washing (and kissing) of the feet of those poor folk by the monarch, as Christ had washed the feet of his disciples. In 1572 the monarch was Elizabeth I. She was thirty-nine years of age, so thirty-nine poor women were selected to be served in this way, although it is to be noted that their feet were prewashed by the yeoman of the laundry, then the sub-almoner, then the almoner. This part of the ceremony being completed, the thirty-nine women received their alms.

[C]ertain yards of broadcloth to make a gown . . . a pair of shoes . . . to each of them a wooden platter, wherein was half a side of salmon, as much l yng, six red herrings, and two cheat lofes of bread. Fifthly, she began with the first again, and gave to each of them a white wooden dish with claret wine. . . . white purses wherein were thirty-nine pence (as they say) after the number of years of her majestys age . . . red leather purses each containing twenty shillings a piece. . . . and hearing the choir a little while, her Majesty withdrew herself, and the company departed; for it was by that time the sun-setting.

DINNER IN RIO

1846: Brazil

Thomas Ewbank left New York on December 2, 1845, bound for Rio de Janeiro. He wrote of his experience in *Life in Brazil; or, a Journal of a Visit to the Land of the Cocoa and the Palm*. On this day, Saint Joseph’s Day, he was pleasantly surprised by a hotel dinner. Note that one of the dishes is a fish, cooked in three different ways, as is mentioned above as a common thread in Saint Joseph’s Day foods.

This being the day of San José [Joseph] the public offices are closed. . . . By 3 pm we returned, and found a dinner nearly ready that surprised me as much as anything else. A slice of bread and cheese, with a handful of mandioca meal, I supposed the extreme limits of the hotel’s bill of fare. We had soup; fish, resembling large striped bass, brought ashore alive, and

prepared in three different ways; boiled beef; roast beef; fried eggs and greens served together; boiled chickens; roasted ditto; ditto fricasseed; curry sauce; salads; potatoes; mandioca, dry and made up like mush; rice; sweet puddings; sweetmeats (quince and citron); bananas; oranges; almonds; prunes; wine of two kinds; liqueurs for the ladies; and a dozen other things. Half an hour after, strong coffee was served. The repast for nine persons, another for the driver, the previous lunch for the party, and feed for four mules, cost only ten dollars. At 8 pm we rode home, after enjoying a day of unmixed pleasure.

A NICE CUPPA

1928: England

The Industrial Health Research Board had as a major field of study the problem of industrial fatigue. In a report released on this day, the board provided convincing evidence that a cup of tea or cocoa and a short rest period were aids to efficiency and helped curb industrial discontent.

FOOD FIRSTS

1936: Wales

Canned beer was available to the British public for the first time at the Felinfoel Brewery in Llanelli, Wales. The town was nicknamed Tinopolis on account of its history and reputation in the manufacture of tin, so it is not surprising that its two breweries, Felinfoel and Buckleys, began a race to become the first to can beer (by the “American method”) on a commercial scale. The *Llanelly & County Guardian* announced the success of Felinfoel on this day.

Beer Canning Experiment. Method Within The Realm Of Practical Business

Following upon successful experiments carried out the by the Felinfoel Brewery Co. Ltd., Llanelly, the *Guardian* understands that beer-canning comes into the realm of practical business from today when beer in cans will be produced for sale at this brewery.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1996: USA

Monsanto Corporation was granted a patent for genetically engineered crops containing the *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) endotoxin. *Bacillus thuringiensis* is a normal inhabitant of soil, and it produces a protein which is converted into a lethal toxin in the stomach of various insects. If the gene which encodes this protein is incorporated into the genome of a crop plant, then there is the expectation that the plants will have a natural insecticidal activity.

1999: Britain

An amendment to the Food Labelling Regulations of 1996 which specifically addressed products containing GM soy and maize came into force on this day. The main requirements of the regulations were as follows:

- All foods which are in a form to be delivered to the final consumer containing ingredients produced from Genetically Modified (GM) soya and maize must clearly indicate this fact except where neither protein or deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) of maize or soya is detectable in the food.
- The description of the foods containing GM soya/maize must be described in the following terms “produced from genetically modified soya/maize” or “genetically modified”, if already listed and must be demoted by an asterisk if several genetically modified ingredients are present in the food.

A further amendment which extended the labeling requirement to nonprepacked foods came into force on September 9.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1798: Australia

John Price, the nineteen-year-old servant of Governor John Hunter, took part in an inland expedition to find, or put paid to the rumors of, a well-resourced inland

community of white men. He was instructed to keep a journal, and on this day wrote that the daily ration was reduced to two biscuits apiece when one of his companions “saw a large green, yellow and black snake, he directly ran and caught it by the head, which made us an excellent dinner.”

MARCH 20

FOOD & SOCIETY

1985: USA

The Great American Meatout was launched “by consumer and animal protection activists, and has become an annual observance by those wishing to have, or promote a ‘more wholesome, less violent diet.’ ” The campaign was started in response to what was perceived as the massive amount of propaganda perpetrated by the meat industry and has grown to become the largest grassroots food and diet education campaign in the country.

FOOD & THE LAW

1543: London, England

A sumptuary law was enacted by the mayor and aldermen of the City of London on this day to limit the food consumed in their own households and those of other office-bearers to a specific number of dishes at each meal. At this time a course consisted of a number of dishes both sweet and sour (although the distinction was not as clear as it is now), and it was usual to have two courses at a meal, or three at special feasts.

The reason for the law is not given, but it may be a reflection of the difficult times and the desire of the mayor and aldermen to set a good example. One of the sources of information is *Wriothesley's Chronicle*, written during the reign of Henry VIII. Wriothesley describes the severe winter of 1542–1543, which had seen the prices of Lenten victuals such as salt fish and other salted foods become “excedinge dere,” and also the occurrence of great “morren” (murrain, or disease) of cattle and sheep which had caused flesh meat to be sold at “unreasonable pryces.” He then goes on to describe the actions of the mayor and

aldermen:

Also this yere, against the feast of Ester [Easter] at a courte of aldermen kepte in the Gyle Hall the 20 day of March, 1543, yt was enacted by the mayre and his brethren that the mayre and shrives should have and be served with but one course at diner and supper in thire howses, the mayre to have but 7 dishes at the moste at dinner or supper at one messe for his owne table, and the shrives but 6 dishes, and every alderman likewise in their howses, upon payne to forfayte for every dish above 6, 40s. for every tyme he or they offende contrary to the sayd Acte; and allos tha the sergeauntes and yeomen of their householdes should have but three dishes at dinner or supper, saving the swordebearers messe to have one dish more; and further that the mayor nor his brethren should from the sayd feast of Easter, by the space of one yere, buy nether crane, swanne, nor bustard, upon payne to forfayte for every one by them to be bought 20s, to be tried by their oath yf it be presented.

FOOD BUSINESS

1602: Holland

The Dutch East India Company was founded by Johan van Oldenbarneveldt and acquired the Dutch monopoly on all trade in Asian waters from the Cape of Good Hope onward. It was empowered to sign treaties, wage war, and administer conquered territories. The company became enormously powerful both economically and politically. When the Japanese shogun closed his country's borders in 1601, the VOC (from the Dutch initials of the company) was allowed to continue trading from the island of Decima, near Nagasaki.

FOOD & WAR

1940: England, World War II

The *Times* reported that the previous day a woman was fined £75 for obtaining sugar in excess of the rationed amount. Mrs. Yvonne Reekie had had her chauffeur carry away enough sugar for 140 people for a week in her Rolls Royce. The primary purpose of the rationing system in Britain was to ensure equality in the distribution of supplies, but Mrs. Reekie clearly thought she was

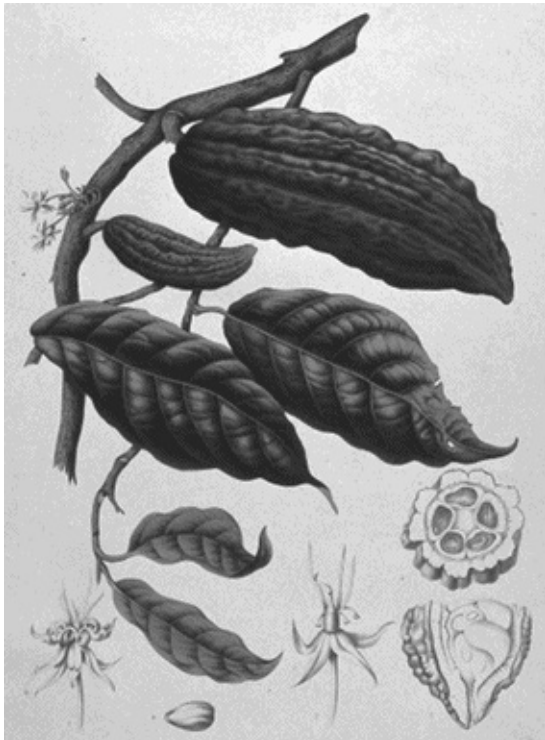
entitled to more than the common folk.

CHOCOLATE

1684 or 1685: Paris, France

Dr. Jos. Bachot of Paris, physician to Queen Maria-Therese of Austria, published a treatise on the medicinal uses of chocolate, in which he proposed that “[w]ell-made chocolate is such a noble invention that it, rather than nectar and ambrosia, should be known as the food of the gods.”

Fifty years later, Carl von Linné agreed and gave the genus to which he allocated the cocoa tree the name *Theobroma*, which literally means “food of the gods.”



Cacao (*Theobroma cacao* L.): fruiting and flowering branch with separate numbered sections of flowers, fruit and seed. Chromolithograph by P. Depannemaeker, c.1885, after B. Hoola van Nooten.

Wellcome Library, London

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

Mr Roper and Brown rode about seven miles down the river, and found that it again formed a large regular bed well supplied with water; and that the country was of a more open character. They came suddenly upon two women cooking mussels, who ran off, leaving their dinners to their unwelcome visitors, who quickly dispatched the agreeable repast.

LAST MEAL

1995: USA

Thomas Grasso was executed by injection in Oklahoma. His last words were said to be "I did not get my Spaghetti-O's, I got spaghetti. I want the press to know this."

MARCH 21

SHUNBUN NO HI

Japan

This is the Japanese celebration of the vernal equinox and the official start of spring. A popular food is *botamochi*, or peony cakes, which are sweetmeats made from pounded sweet sticky rice wrapped in red bean paste. Other springtime foods include raw squid and a special freshwater fish called *ayu*, which is grilled and eaten with green vegetables. Seaweed is especially popular in spring because it is tender and sweet.

NOWRUZ

Nowruz is an ancient Iranian festival marking the vernal equinox (which occurs around this day) and the first day of spring. According to the Iranian calendar, this is New Year's Day. A number of foods are associated with the festival in different regions. Some of them are *samansu* (a Persian snack), *sabzee* (a green vegetable dish), *serjed* (dried fruit), apples, sugar pastries, and *Maewa-e-Nawroozi* (seven nuts in sweetened water).

BALLOON FOOD

1999: Egypt

Bertrand Piccard and Brian Jones landed in the Egyptian desert, having completed the first around-the-world hot air balloon flight. According to a BBC report, they carried enough fresh food, including bread, cheese, and precooked steaks, to last for six or seven days. After this time they relied on dried foods such as cereals and powdered milk. The 29,056-mile flight began in the Swiss Alps and took 19 days, 21 hours, and 55 minutes.

FAST OR FARCE?

1832: England

A national day of fasting and prayer was ordered for this day. The order had been made by the Parliament the previous February in response to the cholera epidemic then sweeping London, the disease being "proof of the judgement of God among us."

The response of the *Poor Man's Guardian* was that it was a "farce day" and that "to tell the poor to fast would indeed be superfluous." It was said that the soup kitchens set up in the city were so welcome to the poor that they gave thanks for the dreadful plague.

FOOD & WAR

1778: American Revolutionary War

Fish was an important source of food for the Continental Army, and John Chaloner, assistant commissary of purchases to Washington's army, wrote from

Valley Forge to Captain Patterson in New Jersey requesting supplies on this day: “The season for procuring shad is nearly arrived You must do your utmost endeavours to procure at least 1,000 Barrels & more if possible.”

Nine days later Chaloner wrote again, an urgent tone obvious in his letter: “His Excellency Strongly urges that a large Quantity be procured—I would wish you to extend your Views beyond your own Neighborhood Securing all Fish wherever Barrels can be obtained. . . . I wish all the shad as low as Trenton to be Secured & Barrelled.”

1941: Britain, World War II

Prime Minister Winston Churchill sent a memo to Lord Woolton, the minister of food, in response to the implementation of the Local Authorities (Community Kitchens) and Sale of Food in Public Air Raid Shelters Order of the previous January. This order required local authorities to set up “feeding centres.” Churchill expressed his distaste for the name:

I hope the term “communal feeding centres” is not going to be adopted. It is an odious expression, suggestive of Communism and the workhouse. I suggest you call them “British Restaurants”. Everybody associates “restaurant” with a good meal, and they may as well have the name if they cannot get anything else.

Two months later there were 800 British restaurants in operation around the country, where workers could get a hot meal for a shilling or so without surrendering any ration coupons.

The writer and diarist Frances Partridge described her experience at one of these British restaurants in *A Pacifist's War*:

We joined a swelling stream of the citizens of Swindon, all following a series of notices marked “British Restaurants”, to a huge elephant house, where thousands of human beings were eating as we did an enormous all-beige meal, starting with beige soup thickened to the consistency of paste, followed by beige mince full of lumps and garnished with beige beans and a few beige potatoes, thin beige apple stew and a sort of skilly. Very satisfying and crushing, and calling up a vision of our future Planned World, all beige also.

1943: England, World War II

Prime Minister Winston Churchill stated in a wartime radio broadcast that “There is no finer investment for a community than putting milk into babies.”

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1835: Argentina

From Charles Darwin’s journal of the voyage of the *Beagle*:

We were now in the republic of Mendoza. The elevation was probably not under 11,000 feet, and the vegetation in consequence exceedingly scanty . . . At the place where we slept water necessarily boiled, from the diminished pressure of the atmosphere, at a lower temperature than it does in a less lofty country; the case being the converse of that of a Papin’s digester. Hence the potatoes, after remaining for some hours in the boiling water, were nearly as hard as ever. The pot was left on the fire all night, and next morning it was boiled again, but yet the potatoes were not cooked. I found out this, by overhearing my two companions discussing the cause, they had come to the simple conclusion, “that the cursed pot [which was a new one] did not choose to boil potatoes.”

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1856: Walden Pond, Concord, Massachusetts, USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau:

10 A. M.—To my red maple sugar camp. Found that, after a pint and a half had run from a single tube after 3 P. M. yesterday, it had frozen about half an inch thick, and this morning a quarter of a pint more had run. Between 10.30 and 11.30 A. M. this forenoon, I caught two and three quarters pints more, from six tubes, at the same tree, though it is completely overcast and threatening rain. Four and one half pints in all. This sap is an agreeable drink, like iced water (by chance), with a pleasant but slight sweetish taste. I boiled it down in the afternoon, and it made an ounce and a half of sugar, without any molasses, which appears to be the average amount yielded by

the sugar maple in similar situations, viz. south edge of a wood, a tree partly decayed, two feet [in] diameter.

It is worth the while to know that there is all this sugar in our woods, much of which might be obtained by using the refuse wood lying about, without damage to the proprietors, who use neither the sugar nor the wood.

I left home at ten and got back before twelve with two and three quarters pints of sap, in addition to the one and three quarters I found collected.

I put in saleratus and a little milk while boiling, the former to neutralize the acid, and the latter to collect the impurities in a skum. After boiling it till I burned it a little, and my small quantity would not flow when cool, but was as hard as half-done candy, I put it on again, and in a minute it was softened and turned to sugar.

While collecting sap, the little of yesterday's lodging snow that was left, dropping from the high pines in Trillium Wood and striking the brittle twigs in its descent, makes me think that the squirrels are running there.

I noticed that my fingers were purpled, evidently from the sap on my auger.

Had a dispute with Father about the *use* of my making this sugar when I knew it could be done and might have bought sugar cheaper at Holden's. He said it took me from my studies. I said I made it my study; I felt as if I had been to a university.

It dropped from each tube about as fast as my pulse beat, and, as there were three tubes directed to each vessel, it flowed at the rate of about one hundred and eighty drops in a minute into it. One maple, standing immediately north of a thick white pine, scarcely flowed at all, while a smaller, farther in the wood, ran pretty well. The south side of a tree bleeds first in spring. I hung my pails on the tubes or a nail. Had two tin pails and a pitcher. Had a three-quarters-inch auger. Made a dozen spouts, five or six inches long, hole as large as a pencil, smoothed with a pencil.



Image of maple sugaring

(Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division [Reproduction number e.g., LC-D420-2992])

MARCH 22

ALL ABOARD FOR LUNCH

1928: Sudan

Lunch aboard a train from the Sudan Government Railways and Steamers service on this day was a multinational concept: there was pasta from Italy, a French dish of ham braised with cabbage, an example of the much-loved English “devil”—and an apple pie, which must surely be one of the most universally loved desserts in the world.

LUNCH

Canellone à l’Italienne

-

Jambon braise au choux

-

Pigeons à la diable.

Pommes nouvelles au beurre

Macédoine de légumes

-

Tarte aux pommes

-

Fromage

-

Café Moka

Devils are spicy-hot dishes much favored by nineteenth-century gentlemen. They were popular at any meal but were particularly favored as the last course at dinner (after the dessert) or as a supper dish. The eccentric Dr. William Kitchener had a good deal to say on the topic in his popular book *The Cook's Oracle* (1845). Here is an excerpt:

DEVIL

Every man must have experienced that—when he has got deep into his third bottle—his palate acquires a degree of torpidity, and his stomach is siezed with a certain craving, which seems to demand a stimulant to the powers of both. The provocatives used on such occasions, an ungrateful world has combined to term devils. . . . It would be an insult to the understanding of our readers, to suppose them ignorant of the usual mode of treating common devils; but we shall make no apology for not giving the most minute instructions for the preparation of a gentler stimulant, which, besides, possesses this advantage—that it may be all done at the table, either by yourself, or at least under your own immediate inspection.

Mix equal parts of fine salt, Cayenne pepper, and curry-powder, with

double the quantity of powder of truffles; dissect, *secundum artem*, a brace of wood-cocks rather under-roasted, split the heads, sub-divide the wings, &c. &c., and powder the whole gently over with the mixture; crush the trail and brains along with the yolk of a hard-boiled egg, a small portion of pounded mace, the grated peel of half a lemon, and half a spoonful of soy, until the ingredients be brought to the consistence of a fine paste; then add a table-spoonful of catchup, a full wine-glass of Madeira, and the juice of two Seville oranges; throw this sauce, along with the birds, into a silver stew-dish, to be heated with spirits of wine, stirring, until the flesh has imbibed the greater part of the liquid. When you have reason to suppose it is completely saturated, pour in a small quantity of salad oil stir all once more well together, put out the light, and then !—serve it round instantly; for it is scarcely necessary to say, that a devil should not only be hot in itself, but eaten hot.

There is however, one precaution to be used in eating it, to which we most earnestly recommend the most particular attention, and for want of which, more than one accident has occurred. It is not, as some people might suppose—to avoid eating too much of it—for that your neighbours will take good care to prevent; but it is this:—in order to pick the bones, you must necessarily take some portion of it with your fingers; and as they thereby become impregnated with its flavour, if you afterwards chance to let them touch your tongue—you will infallibly lick them to the bone, if you do not swallow them entire.

FOOD & WAR

1941: England, World War II

Nella Last was a British housewife who kept a diary during the war years as part of the Mass Observation Project. The diary is a marvelous source of information on the emotional impact of rationing as well as the practicalities:

There were closed stalls everywhere in the market today . . . no eggs, fowls or golden butter . . . golden honey or glowing home-made orange marmalade . . . Only muddy-looking—and *far* too small—cockles and pieces of most unpleasant beetroot. . . . I wandered about with sadness in my heart.

The Ministry of Food published weekly *Food Facts* leaflets throughout the war and for several years afterward to help the British housewife to manage under rationing. Nella Last, a home-maker to the core, would certainly have been aware of them. A few days before this diary entry, the Food Facts leaflet for the week noted the new regulations about jam and included a couple of filling, economical—and patriotic—recipes.

Farmhouse Pudding

You need 8 oz. flour, 2 oz. grated raw potato, 2 oz. suet, a pinch of salt and just enough cold water to mix to a soft dough. Roll out into a neat oval. Spread with 1 lb. chopped root vegetables (whatever you have), salt and pepper and either 1 rasher of bacon finely diced or a sprinkling of gravy powder. Roll up, either in margarine papers or a floured cloth and steam for about two hours (potatoes and greens can be steamed at the same time). Or you can boil the pudding in a jar with a margarine paper cover. Serve with brown gravy or parsley sauce. Quantities given make enough for four people—a patriotic pudding that will give them energy and vitamins in a way they will like.

AMERICAN COLONIAL HISTORY

1621: America

From *Mourt's Relation*, the earliest known first-person account of the settlers' first seven months in New England:

Thursday, the 22nd of March, was a very fair warm day. About noon we met again about our public business, but we had scarce been an hour together, but Samoset came again, and Tisquantum, . . . with three others, and they brought with them some few skins to truck, and some red herrings newly taken and dried, but not salted . . . We sent to the king [Massasiot] a pair of knives, and a copper chain with a jewel at it. To Quadequina we sent likewise a knife and a jewel to hang in his ear, and withal a pot of strong water [liquor], a good quantity of biscuit, and some butter, which were all willingly accepted.

LENTEN DINNERS

1765: England

From the diary of Thomas Turner, a schoolteacher turned shopkeeper in a Sussex village: “*Fryday* [sic] I dined on some salt-fish, egg sauce, parsnips, and potatoes.”

1799: England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde: “*Good Friday*. . . . Dinner to day, Salt Fish, Eggs & Fritters.”

MARCH 23

DINNER AT THE WHITE HOUSE

1970: USA

The menu for dinner this night at the White House—it does not appear to be for a state occasion—was of dishes from the classic French culinary repertoire:

Suprême of Striped Bass Dugléré

Schloss Johannisberger 1967

Tournedos of Beef Sauté Rossini

Artichokes Mascotte

Fresh Asparagus Hollandaise

Chateau Latour 1966

Bibb Lettuce Salad

Bel Paese Cheese

Pol Roger, Brut, 1961

Charlotte Royale

FOOD FIRSTS

1990: USA

The first biotechnology-derived food ingredient was approved by the Advisory Committee on Novel Foods and Processes (ACNFP) of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on this day. It was *chymosin*, an enzyme used to coagulate milk in the first stage of cheese production. Chymosin is a proteolytic enzyme which is the active ingredient in rennet, found in the stomach of ruminant animals such as cows. The FDA affirmed that chymosin was GRAS, indicating that it was exempt from the usual testing requirements for new food additives. The new development was a process of producing the enzyme from microbacteria.

A number of factors were important in the FDA's decision to approve chymosin produced by this method and for granting it the GRAS status. Important factors were that the protein has the same structure as that derived from animals, impurities are removed by the manufacturing process, and bacteria used in the process (which are nonpathogenic) are also destroyed, as are the genes for antibiotic resistance.

A number of plant materials will also coagulate milk, such as the juice of figs and nettles. These have been used since antiquity and are very relevant today to vegans and many vegetarians.

Until the advent of prepared rennet (such as junket tablets) or in areas where this was not available, anyone wishing to make it themselves had a time-consuming process ahead of them, as the following instructions from *Cassell's Dictionary of Cookery* (c. 1870) demonstrate:

Rennet.

Rennet is the name given to the prepared inner membrane of a calf's, pig's, hare's, fowl's, or turkey's stomach, which is used for turning milk. It may frequently be bought ready dried of the butcher, and then may be kept a long time, if hung in a cool place, and covered to preserve it from dust. When wanted for use, a little piece about two inches square should be soaked in a quarter of a pint of hot water for four hours, and the liquor thus

obtained should be stirred into lukewarm milk.

Rennet varies so much in strength that it is not easy to say how much will be required. Ordinarily, a table-spoonful of the liquor in which the dried rennet has been soaked will turn two quarts of milk. For people living in towns the easiest way of procuring rennet is to buy a bottle of the liquor, which is sold by almost all chemists ready for use. Rennet, however, may be prepared at home, as follows :—Take the stomachs of two or more freshly-killed calves. Cleanse them thoroughly from all impurities, and rub them inside and out with salt. Pack them closely in a stone jar, strew salt between and over them, and cover them up.

COOKING SCHOOLS

1865: New York, USA

The official opening of the Cooking Academy of French chef and “Professor of Cooking” Pierre Blot took place on this day at No. 90, Fourth Avenue. The opening was a great success, the *New York Times* reporting that he had “been quite successful in obtaining pupils, at the present time having sixty-two, many of whom are wealthy and intelligent ladies who are determined not only to know how dishes should be prepared, but also to cook themselves.”

Cooking was taught by demonstration, the students taking notes while the actual preparation was carried out by a female assistant superintended by Professor Blot, who explained the various methods. Different dishes were prepared each day. On this occasion the menu was as follows: “Pot au feu; striped bass; Hullandar’s sauce [presumably “Hollandaise”]; fillet of mutton, larded and braised; roasted chicken au jus; spinach a la crème; turnips, as a garniture for the boiled beef; genoises, with almonds.”

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1880: USA

John Stevens received Patent No. 225,770 for his “Grain-Crushing Roll,” an invention which provided “new and useful Improvements in Mills for Grinding and Reducing Wheat and other Grain.” His improvements enabled a 70 percent increase in flour production.

FOOD & THE LAW

1815: Britain, The Corn Laws

Laws controlling the trade in corn existed in Britain from the twelfth century (“corn” at this time in Britain being a generic word for cereal crops, particularly wheat) in recognition of the fact that it was the source of the two staple foods for all classes—bread and ale or beer. In 1815 the British legislature passed the Importation Act in order to maintain high wheat prices in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars. The highly controversial laws were repealed in 1846 in response to a vigorous campaign by the Anti-Corn-Law League and the Irish potato famine.

FOOD & SPACE

1965

Astronaut John W. Young smuggled a corned beef sandwich aboard the five-hour Gemini 3 flight, against all regulations. The sandwich was eaten by another astronaut aboard—Virgil I. “Gus” Grissom. Apparently they were both disciplined over the incident.

MARCH 24

THE GIFT OF RICE

1854: Japan

Commodore Matthew Perry led a small American fleet to Japan in 1852. In 1854 he returned, with the express purpose of opening up diplomatic relations between the United States and Japan. He arrived in Yokohama on March 8, and on March 24 he was formally invited to receive gifts from the emperor, in recognition of the courtesy of the United States. After the presentation of many costly and luxurious objects, as he prepared to depart Perry was informed that there was one more article intended for the president. In Perry’s words:

They accordingly conducted the Commodore and his officers to the beach, where one or two hundred sacks of rice were pointed out, heaped up in readiness to be sent on board the ships. As that immense supply of substantial food seemed to excite some wonder on the part of the Americans, Yenoske the interpreter remarked that it was always customary with the Japanese, when bestowing royal presents, to include a certain quantity of rice, although he did not say whether the quantity always amounted, as on the present occasion, to hundreds of sacks.

While contemplating these substantial evidences of Japanese generosity, the attention of all was suddenly riveted upon twenty-five monstrous fellows who tramped down the beach like so many huge elephants. They were professional wrestlers and formed part of the retinue of the princes, who kept them for their private amusement and for public entertainment. They were enormously tall, and tremendously heavy. . . . They were so enormously big that they appeared to have lost their distinctive features, and seemed to be only twenty-five masses of fat.

As a preliminary exhibition of the power of these men, the princes set them to removing the sacks of rice to a convenient place on the shore for shipping. Each of the sacks weighed not less than one hundred twenty-five pounds, and there were only two of the wrestlers who did not carry each two sacks at a time. They bore the sacks on the right shoulder, lifting the first from the ground and adjusting it without help, but obtaining aid for the raising of the second. One man carried a sack suspended by his teeth, and another, taking one in his arms, turned repeated somersaults as he held it, apparently with as much ease as if his weight of flesh had been only so much gossamer and his load a feather.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1796: Australia

George Bass, a junior naval surgeon, the young Matthew Flinders, and a ship's boy named William Martin set off in their small boat *Tom Thumb* to explore the area south of Botany Bay. As supplies they took enough bread and meat for ten days and a few watermelons. More than half of these were lost on the second day out when a huge wave lifted them and smashed them onto the shore.

DR BUTLER'S ALE

1660: England

An advertisement appeared on this day in the *Mercurious Anglicus* which promoted “Dr Butler’s Ale.” Doctor Butler was an eccentric man born in 1535 who became physician to King James I. He invented a medicated ale that became enormously popular and remained so for well over a century.

At Tobias Coffee-House in Pye-corner is sold the right Drink, called Dr Butler’s Ale. It is an excellent Stomach Drink; it helps Digestion, expels Wind, provokes Urine, and dissolves congealed Phlegm upon the Lungs, and is therefore good against Colds, Coughs, Phtisical and Consumptive Distempers; and being drunk in the Evening, it moderately fortifies Nature, causeth good rest, and hugely corroborates the Brain and Memory.

FOOD & WAR

1942: Britain, World War II

The National Loaf was introduced on this day. The loaf was made from wheat of 85 percent extraction, so it was “brown” bread. The new formula was ordered as part of the wartime effort to use wheat more efficiently, thereby saving shipping space for military use. There were mixed feelings about the brown loaf, which was jokingly referred to by some as “Hitler’s secret weapon.” In 1943, potato flour was allowed to be added to the loaf to further eke out the flour supplies.

The legal requirements of the National Loaf were not abolished until 1956.

INSECTS FOR DINNER

2001: England

The Royal Entomological Society followed their meeting with a banquet that featured a number of insect-based dishes. The meal was said to be intended as “a light hearted affair which will expand the gastronomic horizons of those attending,” but there was also a more serious agenda. It was also intended to emphasize the impact of the adoption of a Western-type diet on developing

nations in which insects have been a traditional and nutritionally important source of food.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1663: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys. Pepys worked for the Navy Victualling Office, and on this day he saw ships' biscuits (referred to as "bread") being prepared on a commercial scale:

By and by Sir J. Minnes and I to the Victualling Office by appointment to meet several persons upon stating the demands of some people of money from the King. Here we went into their Bakehouse, and saw all the ovens at work, and good bread too, as ever I would desire to eat.

1889: Arles, France

Vincent van Gogh wrote to his brother Theo:

M. Rey says that instead of eating enough and at regular times, I kept myself going on coffee and alcohol. I admit all that, but all the same it is true that to attain the high yellow note that I attained last summer, I really had to be pretty well keyed up. And that after all, an artist is a man with his work to do, and it is not for the first idler who comes along to crush him for good.

1914: Brazil

From Theodore Roosevelt's narrative of his journey *Through the Brazilian Wilderness*:

In the morning, just before leaving this camp, a tapir swam across stream a little way above us; but unfortunately we could not get a shot at it. An ample supply of tapir beef would have meant much to us.

We had started with fifty days' rations; but this by no means meant full rations, in the sense of giving every man all he wanted to eat. We had two meals a day, and were on rather short commons — both our mess and the

meals a day, and were on rather short commons—both our mess and the camaradas’—except when we got plenty of palmtops. For our mess we had the boxes chosen by Fiala, each containing a day’s rations for six men, our number. But we made each box last a day and a half, or at times two days, and in addition we gave some of the food to the camaradas. It was only on the rare occasions when we had killed some monkeys or curassows, or caught some fish, that everybody had enough. We would have welcomed that tapir. So far the game, fish, and fruit had been too scarce to be an element of weight in our food supply. In an exploring trip like ours, through a difficult and utterly unknown country, especially if densely forested, there is little time to halt, and game cannot be counted on. It is only in lands like our own West thirty years ago, like South Africa in the middle of the last century, like East Africa to-day that game can be made the chief food supply. On this trip our only substantial food supply from the country hitherto had been that furnished by the palmtops. Two men were detailed every day to cut down palms for food.

MARCH 25

THE TICHBORNE DOLE

An interesting custom has been carried out on this day (with only minor interruptions) since the twelfth century in the English village of Tichborne in Hampshire. A “dole” was a charitable gift to the poor, often set up as a bequest. In the mid-twelfth century, such a bequest was set up by the saintly but frail Lady Mabella Tichborne. Her husband, Sir Roger, was decidedly uncharitable, but at her urging, when she was very ill, he agreed to give to the poor each year the produce from as much land as she could walk around while carrying a blazing torch. Legend says that Lady Mabella rose from her death-bed and crawled around a 23-acre plot of land—a plot still known as “The Crawls.” Her husband and heirs had no choice then but to accede to her request. Originally, loaves of bread were baked and distributed, but now it is flour. The inhabitants of Tichborne and Cheriton are still eligible for a “dole” of flour to the amount of one gallon per adult and half a gallon per child on the Feast of the Annunciation.

RECIPES FROM THE WORKHOUSE

1884: Wales

The Board of Guardians for the workhouse at Aberystwyth delivered their half-yearly report on this day. In it they made some orders in relation to the proportion of ingredients to be used in the staple workhouse foods. The quantities per serving are not given in these orders, but generally speaking they were very inadequate, and the quality of the ingredients often very poor.

- *Soup*: to 8 pints of water; 24 oz raw meat; 16 oz split peas or scotch barley; 2 oz. oatmeal; 8 oz fresh vegetables; bones, dried herbs, and seasoning; to 8 pints of meat liquor.
- *Broth*: to 8 pints of meat liquor, 16 oz. fresh vegetables; parsley and seasoning.
- *Porridge*: to 4 pints of milk and 4 pints of water, 16 oz. oatmeal. This may be made for children with 8 pints milk and 12 oz. oatmeal.
- *Gruel*: to 8 pints of water, 16 oz. oatmeal; 4 oz. treacle; allspice, to be used occasionally.
- *Suet Pudding*, boiled or baked: 8 oz. flour, 1 ¼ or 1 ½ oz. suet; 2 oz. skim milk, when available; to be served with Broth, Gravy, Treacle, or Sauce.
- *Rice Pudding*, baked: 3 ½ oz. rice, ½ oz. suet, ½ oz. sugar, ½ oz. milk, when available; water.
- *Potato Hash*: 24 oz. raw meat; 96 oz. potato; 12 oz. onions; seasoning; water or meat liquor [presumably 8 pints.]
- *Tea*: to ten pints, 1 oz. tea, 5 oz. sugar, 1 pint milk.
- *Bread* to be made of Wheaten Flour, ground through and through, except for the sick and very young.

A CACTUS DINNER

1908: Seattle, Washington, USA

A dinner featuring “Mr. Luther Burbank’s Thornless Cactus” was held at the

Hotel Butler on this day. The prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia ficus-indica*) was one of Burbank's great interests. He was convinced of its value as human food and of its potential for greening the desert; with those goals in mind, he worked for years to develop a thornless variety. The dinner on this day was one of his promotional efforts.

Guests at the dinner sat down to a menu of cactus fruit, cactus pickles, cactus soup, cactus "okra," cactus "egg plant," cactus pancakes, cactus tartlets, and cactus sherbet, in addition to the more traditional dinner offerings of caviar, oysters, crab Newburg, beef in Madera sauce, Camembert cheese, and *petit fours*.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

1615: England

The first piracy trial was held in Yarmouth, England, this day. Five men were accused of capturing the ship *Seahorse* and her cargo of twenty-two thousand lampreys (a very valuable fish at the time), thirty barrels of beer, and six barrels of red herrings. Three of the men were hanged for the crime.

1789: Australia

In the new British colony of Botany Bay, colonists were close to starvation, and ration offences and food theft were treated with the utmost severity. In court on this day, the records show that several men confessed to theft from the public store of one hundred gallons of liquor, five hundred weight of flour, sixteen pounds of butter, a bag of bread, and eight pounds of leaf tobacco. The next day the standard "Awful Sentence" for such crimes was passed and the gallows ordered to be erected.

1911: USA

Joseph Wirth was admitted to the federal penitentiary at Leavenworth, Kansas, on this day, after having been convicted (along with his brother, Toney) for offences against the Oleomargarine Act (*see August 2*). He spent over three years in the prison for selling oleomargarine colored to look like butter without paying the 10 cents per pound tax.

A SINISTER OMELET

1794: France

The French Revolution was underway, and the Marquis de Condorcet, a mathematician and social reformer accused of being a Royalist, had been in hiding from Robespierre for eight months. Hunger drove him out from his hiding place on this day, and, dressed in rough garb, he went out to buy dinner. His order of a twelve-egg omelette—which was “*trop imposante*” for a working man—made the tavern keeper suspicious, and he contacted the authorities. Condorcet was arrested and imprisoned but avoided the guillotine by taking poison on the 27th of March.

FOOD & WAR

1811: France, Napoleonic Wars

Napoleon Bonaparte issued a decree on this day which created a number of incentives and rewards for developments in the sugar beet industry. The spur was the Continental blockade of sugar imports into Europe by the British, who controlled the industry in the Caribbean, and it became necessary to find a domestic source of sugar, which was vital at the time for food preservation. Eighty thousand acres of land were allocated for the production of beets, incentives were offered to growers, six sugar-beet “schools” were set up with student scholarships offered, and factories to process the beets were constructed.

1940: Sweden, World War II

It was officially announced that coffee and tea would be rationed from the following day and that the import of two hundred other commodities in the “luxury” category would also be subject to a government licensing system. The action was taken “for reasons of foreign exchange economy.”

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1861: Australia

The Bark and Yillah expeditions to cross the continent from south to north were in

The Burke and Wills expedition to cross the continent from south to north was in serious trouble at this point. They were on the return journey, and the members of the party were on the verge of starvation. William John Wills's journal entry for the day tells a sad tale:

Started at half-past five, looking for a good place to halt for the day. . . . After breakfast, took some time altitudes, and was about to go back to last camp for some things that had been left, when I found Gray behind a tree eating skilligolee. He explained that he was suffering from dysentery, and had taken the flour without leave. Sent him to report himself to Mr Burke, and went on. He, having got King to tell Mr Burke for him, was called up, and received a good thrashing. There is no knowing to what extent he has been robbing us. Many things have been found to run unaccountably short.

Charley Gray died on April 17 and was buried by his companions.

Skilligalee is a thin broth or porridge, commonly associated with the diet of prisoners and paupers. One description, from 1819, mentions "Tolerable flour, of which the cook composed a certain food for breakfast, known among sailors by the name of skilligolee, being in plain English, paste." No doubt Charley Gray simply mixed some of the stolen flour with water, without the benefit of cooking.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1669: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

[T]o hold the Court Martiall about the loss of the *Defyance*; and so presently, we by boat to *The Charles* . . . and there we fell to the business . . . and so left them to do what they pleased [with the guilty party]; and while they were debating it, the bosun of the ship did bring us out of the Kettle a piece of hot salt beef and some brown bead and brandy; and there we did make a little meal, but so good as I never would desire to eat better meat while I live——only, I would have cleaner dishes.

1802: Jamaica

From *Lady Nugent's Journal of Her Residence in Jamaica from 1801–1805*:

Breakfast at 8. . . . I walked with the ladies in the garden . . . till out horses were ready . . . We all returned to the Ramble at about 2, and sat down to a second breakfast.

I now found the reason that the ladies here eat so little dinner. I could not help remarking Mrs Cox, who sat next to me at second breakfast. She began with fish, of which she ate plentifully, all swimming in oil. Then cold veal, with the same sauce! Then tarts, cakes, and fruit. And all the other ladies did the same, changing their plates, drinking wine, &c. as if it were dinner.

1914: Brazil

From Theodore Roosevelt's narrative of his journey *Through the Brazilian Wilderness*:

As our food supply lowered we were constantly more desirous of economizing the strength of the men. One day more would complete a month since we had embarked on the Duvida as we had started in February, the lunar and calendar months coincided.

We had used up over half our provisions. We had come only a trifle over 160 kilometres, thanks to the character and number of the rapids. We believed we had three or four times the distance yet to go before coming to a part of the river where we might hope to meet assistance . . .

We found and ate wild pineapples. Wild beans were in flower. At dinner we had a toucan and a couple of parrots, which were very good.

MARCH 26

FOOD & THE LAW

1790: France

The hated *gabelle*, or salt tax, was abolished on this day. The *gabelle* originally denoted any tax on commodities, but from the fifteenth century onward the term

was applied specifically to the salt tax. Salt was needed in huge quantities for food preservation at this time, but the tax was high and was neither applied equally to all groups nor uniformly across the country. Many privileged groups such as the aristocracy and clergy were exempt, but the ordinary farmers and butchers needing to salt their pigs or their fish for Lent had to pay. A year's supply of salt could cost up to one month's wages for the average family living in regions remote from the salt-producing areas. As for the individual, one clergyman in 1708 was moved to say:

There are whole families who for the want of salt, eat not soup sometimes in a whole week although it be their common nourishment. A man in that case grieved to see his wife and children in starving languishing condition, ventures to go abroad to buy salt in the provinces where it is three parts in four cheaper. If discovered, he is certainly sent to the galleys. It is a very melancholy sight to see a wife and children lament their father, whom they see laden with chains and irrevocably lost; and that for no other cause but endeavoring to procure subsistence for those to whom he gave birth.

The salt tax was included in the list of grievances drawn up for the Estates General of 1789 as the French Revolutionary movement gathered force. It was reinstated by Napoleon in 1806, abolished for a brief period during the Second Republic, reinstated again, and finally abolished once and for all in 1945.

THE END OF SERFDOM

1868: Russia

In 1861 Nicholas Ivanovich Turgenyev began an annual tradition of a dinner to celebrate the end of serfdom. In 1868, he dined with his cousin Ivan Turgenyev, Prince August Golitsyn, Father-Jesuit Ivan Gagarin (whose table manners offended Nicholas), Prince Nicholas Troubetzkoy (who found Gagarin's manners amusing), and Count Muraviev-Amursky, governor-general of Eastern Siberia.

THE VANDERBILT BALL

1883: New York, USA

Mrs. William K. Vanderbilt held a fancy dress ball at her home in Fifth Avenue

MRS. WILLIAM K. VANDERBILT held a fancy-dress ball at her home in Fifth Avenue this evening. The newspapers reported the upcoming event with giddy anticipation. A thousand guests were expected to attend the event which was to be "the greatest . . . of the coming month," and "the largest ball to be given this winter at a private house, and the finest for ten years." The ball supper was to be provided by the Vanderbilt "corps of cooks" and a professional caterer, with guests being served by a Vanderbilt "staff of waiters." The total cost of the ball was estimated to be \$250,000, of which \$19,000 was for flowers and \$65,000 for catering, which included \$5,000 for champagne.

The supper was to include "all manner of good things" apparently too numerous to list in the newspapers. It was noted however that the feast would require

Twelve barrels of flour for the cakes and pastries, one hundred dozen eggs, five hundred head of lettuce. The ices were to be in forms appropriate to Easter, such as eggs, little chickens and ducks, ascension lilies, tulips and crocuses, and will be served on the finest Sevres-ware, with golden spoons.

A Vanderbilt retainer was asked next day by a *New York Morning Journal* reporter about the state of the residence after the ball and the fate of the leftovers. The retainer apparently said:

Talkin' of food, I reckon there's enough left to supply a hundred families for a week. Most of it'll have to be given away, 'cos it can't keep. . . . The 'ospitals and the servants [will get it]. Why, the waste in hices [ices] alone was somethin' 'orful, and as for the wines and lickens, it was locked hup just as soon as possible to keep the men servants from getting drunk. T'wards the larst, a good many ov 'em had as much as they could carry. . . . I spose, take it altogether, there was as much as \$1000-worth of food left hover in one shape or another, most of which'd spoil inside twenty-four 'ours. Then there's a tidy bit of broken glass, which is always to be expected at such gatherin's. How much'd that come to. Well, I think a couple of hundred dollars'd about cover that.

The reporter then went on to note that it had been ascertained "from another source" that "surplus food and other perishable articles had already been provided for a week before the ball took place amongst the various charities and institutions in which the Vanderbilt family are interested. All day long yesterday several light wagons were busily occupied in carting them away."

“ROYAL FISH” IN NEW ENGLAND

1715: America

“Royal fish” were deemed since at least the fourteenth century in England to include sturgeons, whales, dolphins, and porpoises. Whenever these were found they had to be offered to the monarch or such persons as the monarch had granted the privilege in a particular area. This law was not formally abandoned until Queen Elizabeth II relinquished her right to the fish in the 1970s.

The inclusion of sea animals that we now know to be mammals was not primarily due to ignorance on the part of medieval scientists but to the general use of the term *fish* to apply to animals living in water. The distinction was important from the perspective of the prevailing scientific beliefs of the age, which are known as the doctrine of humors.

In 1715 it would clearly have been impossible for King George III to claim any such fish found in the waters of his American colonies, but the rights to royal fish provided an ideal incentive for a token fee.

Lords Proprietors of Carolina to Governor Eden.

. . . We think it proper to give all due encouragements to such persons as are willing to come to settle among you, and therefore require you to give a liberty to any New England men or others to catch whale, sturgeon, or any other Royal Fish upon your coast, during the term of three years, they paying only two deer-skins yearly, *etc.* Signed, Carteret, Palatin; M. Ashley, J. Danson.

MAMMOTH BREAD

1804: Washington, DC, USA

President Thomas Jefferson attended a Senate-sponsored fund-raiser and was the first to cut into a “mammoth loaf” especially prepared for the event. Two years previously, a Baptist community in Massachusetts had sent Jefferson a “mammoth cheese” weighing 1,200 pounds in recognition of his support of religious tolerance (*see January 1*). The mammoth loaf was made by navy

bakers and wheeled into the room to accompany the remnants of the cheese. Also supplied at the event were a side of roast beef and an appropriately large amount of alcohol.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1554: Italy

From the diary of painter Jacopo Carrucci da Pontormo: “Tuesday evening, I had a sore throat and ate a piece of rosemary flavoured raisin bread and a pancake and salad and dried figs.”

1662: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys. Every year Pepys held a dinner to celebrate the anniversary of his surgery for a stone in the bladder. Bladder stones were quite common at the time, and the surgery brutal and risky without anesthesia, pain relief, or antibiotics, so a successful recovery was well worth celebrating.

Up earely—this being, by God’s great blessing, the fourthe solemne day of my cutting the stone this day four year. . . . I had a pretty dinner for them (*several guests*)—*viz*: a brace of stewed Carps, six roasted chicken and a Jowle of salmon hot, for the first course—a Tanzy and two neats’ tongues and cheese the second. And were very merry al the afternoon. . . . We had a man-cook to dress dinner today, and sent for Jane to help us.

Tansy (tanzy, tansie): This was a popular seventeenth-century dish made from eggs flavored with the juice of the bitter-tasting herb of the same name (*Tanacetum vulgare*), although in practice many other herbs and greens were used. Large doses of tansy are now known to be poisonous, so modern versions of the recipe should not include it. The form of the dish was somewhat like an omelette, pancake, scrambled egg, a crustless quiche. Here is a recipe from a famous cookbook first published just two years before Pepys’s diary entry:

To make a Tansie the best way

Take twenty-eight eggs, and take away five whites, strain them with a quart of good thick sweet cream, and put to it grated nutmeg, a race of ginger grated, as much cinamon beaten fine, and a penny white loaf grated also,

mix them all together with a little salt, then stamp some green wheat with some tansie herbs, strain it into the cream and eggs, and stir all together; then take a clean frying pan, and a quarter of a pound of butter, melt it, and put in the tansie, and stir it continually over the fire with a slice, ladle, or saucer, chop it and break it as it thickens, and being well incorporated put it out of the pan into a dish, and chop it very fine; then make the frying pan very clean, and put in some more butter, melt it, and fry it whole or in spoonfuls; being finely fried on both sides, dish it up, and sprinkle it with rose-vinegar, grape-verjuyce, elder-vinegar, cowslip-vinegar, or the juyce of three or four oranges, and strew on a good store of fine sugar.

—*The Accomplisht Cook* (1660), by Robert May

MARCH 27

THE NAVAL RATION

1794: USA

The Naval Act set down the ration to be provided for navy men:

Sunday: 1 lb bread, 1½ lb beef, ½ pt rice

Monday: 1 lb bread, 1 lb pork, ½ pt peas, 4 oz cheese

Tuesday: 1 lb bread, 1½ lb beef, 1 lb potatoes or turnips and pudding

Wednesday: 1 lb bread, 2 oz butter or, in lieu thereof, 6 oz molasses, 4 oz cheese and ½ pt rice

Thursday: 1 lb bread, 1 lb pork, ½ pint peas, ½ pt peas or beans

..... 1 lb bread. 1 lb salt fish. 2 oz butter or 1 gill oil and 1 lb

Friday: _____
potatoes

Saturday: 1 lb bread, 1 lb pork, ½ pint peas or beans, 4 oz cheese

Congress also provided that “there shall also be allowed one-half pint of distilled spirits per day or, in lieu thereof, one quart of beer per day, to each ration.” Regulations governing the consumption of alcohol aboard U.S. Navy vessels varied from time to time over the next 120 years. In 1862 the spirits ration was ceased, and in lieu of compensation, sailors received a 5-cents-a-day pay rise. In 1914, General Order 99 prohibited “the use or introduction for drinking purposes of alcoholic liquors on board any naval vessel, or within any navy yard or station,” as of July 1, 1914.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1860: USA

Two patents for corkscrews with different actions were issued on this day.

M. L. Byrn of New York City was issued Patent No. 27,615 for a direct pull type in the form of a “covered gimlet screw with a ‘T’ handle.”

Philos Blakes was issued Patent No. 27,665 for a metal frame type.

1990: USA

Harold Osrow and Zvi Bleier were granted patent No. 4,910,973 for a “Portable Ice Cream Machine.”

COMMODORE PERRY IN JAPAN

1854: Japan

From the account of Commodore Matthew Perry of his visit to Japan (see **March 24**).

He discusses the entertainment given to the Japanese commissioners and their attendants aboard the *Powhatan*.

As it was known that the strictness of Japanese etiquette would not allow the high commissioners to sit the same table with their subordinates, the Commodore ordered two banquets, one to be spread in his cabin for the chief dignitaries, and another on the quarter-deck.

The Japanese party upon deck, who were entertained by a large body of officers from the various ships, became quite uproarious under the influence of overflowing supplies of champagne, Madeira, and punch, which they seemed greatly to relish. The Japanese took the lead in proposing healths and toasts, and were by no means the most backward in drinking them. They kept shouting at the top of their voices, and were heard far above the music of the bands that enlivened the entertainment by a succession of brisk and cheerful tunes. In the eagerness of the Japanese appetite there was but little discrimination in the choice of dishes and in the order of courses, and the most startling heterodoxy was exhibited in the confused commingling of fish, flesh, and fowl, soups and syrups, fruits, fricassees, roast and boiled, pickles and preserves. As a most generous supply had been provided, there were still some remnants of the feast left after the guests had satisfied their voracity, which most of these Japanese, in accordance with their custom, stowed away about their persons to carry off. The Japanese always have an abundant supply of paper within the left bosom of their loose robes, in a capacious pocket. This is used for various purposes; one species, as soft as our cotton cloth, and withal exceedingly tough, is used for a handkerchief; another furnishes the material for taking notes, or for wrapping up what is left a feast. On the present occasion, when the dinner was over, all the Japanese guests simultaneously spread out their long folds of paper, and gathering what scraps they could lay their hands on, without regard to the kind of food, made up an envelope of conglomerate eatables in which there was such a confusion of the sour and sweet, the albuminous, oleaginous, and saccharine, that the chemistry of Liebig or the practised taste of the Commodore's Parisian cook would never have reached a satisfactory analysis. They not only always followed this practice themselves, but insisted that their American guests, when entertained at a Japanese feast, should adopt it also. Whenever the Commodore and his officers were feasted on shore, paper parcels of the remnants were thrust into their hands on leaving.

A return banquet was given by the Japanese on March 31 (see this date) after the signing of the Kanagawa Treaty.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1835: Argentina

From Charles Darwin's journal of the voyage of the *Beagle*:

We rode on to Mendoza. The country was beautifully cultivated, and resembled Chile. This neighbourhood is celebrated for its fruit; and certainly nothing could appear more flourishing than the vineyards and the orchards of figs, peaches, and olives. We bought watermelons nearly twice as large as a man's head, most deliciously cool and well-flavoured, for a halfpenny apiece; and for the value of threepence, half a wheelbarrowful of peaches.

1841: Australia

From the journal of Edward John Eyre, on his expedition to cross the western half of the continent of Australia.

Water supply during the journey was a constant problem, and in his journal entry for the day Eyre describes the native method of procuring water and food from the apparently desperately empty, hot, and dry country.

I considered we were now one hundred and two miles from the last water, and expected we had about fifty more to go to the next; the poor animals were almost exhausted, but as the dew was heavy they were disposed to eat had there been grass of any kind for them. The overseer and I as usual watched them alternately, each taking the duty for four hours and sleeping the other four; to me this was the first sleep I had had for the last three nights.

Whilst in camp, during the heat of the day, the native boys shewed me the way in which natives procure water for themselves, when wandering among the scrubs, and by means of which they are enabled to remain out almost any length of time, in a country quite destitute of surface water. I had often heard of the natives procuring water from the roots of trees, and had

frequently seen indications of their having so obtained it, but I had never before seen the process actually gone through. Selecting a large healthy looking tree out of the gum-scrub, and growing in a hollow, or flat between two ridges, the native digs round at a few feet from the trunk, to find the lateral roots; to one unaccustomed to the work, it is a difficult and laborious thing frequently to find these roots, but to the practised eye of the native, some slight inequality of the surface, or some other mark, points out to him their exact position at once, and he rarely digs in the wrong place. Upon breaking the end next to the tree, the root is lifted, and run out for twenty or thirty feet; the bark is then peeled off, and the root broken into pieces, six or eight inches long, and these again, if thick, are split into thinner pieces; they are then sucked, or shaken over a piece of bark, or stuck up together in the bark upon their ends, and water is slowly discharged from them; if shaken, it comes out like a shower of very fine rain. The roots vary in diameter from one inch to three; the best are those from one to two and a half inches, and of great length. The quantity of water contained in a good root, would probably fill two-thirds of a pint. I saw my own boys get one-third of a pint out in this way in about a quarter of an hour, and they were by no means adepts at the practice, having never been compelled to resort to it from necessity. . . .

I have myself observed, that no part of the country is so utterly worthless, as not to have attractions sufficient occasionally to tempt the wandering savage into its recesses. In the arid, barren, naked plains of the north, with not a shrub to shelter him from the heat, not a stick to burn for his fire (except what he carried with him), the native is found, and where, as far as I could ascertain, the whole country around appeared equally devoid of either animal or vegetable life. In other cases, the very regions, which, in the eyes of the European, are most barren and worthless, are to the native the most valuable and productive. Such are dense brushes, or sandy tracts of country, covered with shrubs, for here the wallabie, the opossum, the kangaroo rat, the bandicoot, the leipoa, snakes, lizards, iguanas, and many other animals, reptiles, birds, &c., abound; whilst the kangaroo, the emu, and the native dog, are found upon their borders, or in the vicinity of those small, grassy plains, which are occasionally met with amidst the closest brushes.

MARCH 28

DINNER ON HORSEBACK

1903: New York, USA

The famous “Horseback dinner” was held at Sherry’s of New York.

There was a vogue among the wealthy of America (and later of Britain) during the decades spanning the turn from the nineteenth to the twentieth centuries for “freak dinners.” These were events in which the meal or the venue were startlingly novel in some way, and they were almost always extremely expensive to host. The English *Strand Magazine* in 1904 described the dinner put on this night by the wealthy industrialist C. K. G. Billings:

This remarkable horseback dinner was given in the great ballroom at Sherry’s by Mr C. K. G. Billings, of New York, and, as it was intended to celebrate the construction of a new stable, the rumour went round that the banquet would be held in the structure itself. The guests, however, met at Sherry’s, and were escorted to a small banquet room, where a long table, in the form of an ellipse, was lavishly banked with flowers. The centre space was occupied by a stuffed horse, which cast his glass eyes curiously upon the assembly as the oysters and caviare were served. So convinced were the guests that this was the real and much-talked-about equestrian dinner that their surprise was great when they were asked to follow their host into an adjoining room.

“Here,” according to the report of one who was at this famous banquet, “there had taken place an amazing transformation, for the decoration, the waxed floors, and everything of the world of indoors had been obliterated. A space sixty-five by eighty-five feet in the centre of the room had been enclosed by scenery. The guests were in a land of winding roadways, of brooks which coursed through green meadows, and of giant elms. There were cottages, vine-covered, and at the edge of a country estate was a porter’s lodge. Far away stretched fields of grain. Over all was the blaze of a summer sun, for above in a vault of blue were strung electric lights. On all sides was the country, and in the middle of the room, rising in a pyramid, were geraniums, daisies, and roses, all blooming as if in the air of June. Above them a palm formed the apex of a pyramid thirty feet at the base. The floor was covered with long, velvety grass. Around the centrepiece were arranged thirty-one horses waiting for their riders. Mr Billings’s

mount stood near the door, gazing into the geranium bed. How the steeds got up to the ballroom is no mystery in these days of large lifts, and they were well-trained horses, who cared not for lights and unusual conditions. Each guest found his mount by means of a horseshoe-shaped card attached to the saddle of the horse, just as he had been guided to his seat at the preliminary banquet by means of the bits of Bristol-board at each cover.”

Between every two horses there was placed a carpet-covered block, from which the diners swung into their saddles, where, from little tables placed upon the pommels, they ate their splendid dinner. The horses showed little nervousness. Their trappings were yellow and gold, making pretty contrast with the costumes of the servants, who wore trousers of white buckskin, scarlet coats, and boots with yellow tops. Towards the end of the feast the horses were treated with a consideration due to their efforts, for a turkey-red fence surrounding the floral pyramid was discovered by the guests to contain feeding-troughs in which had been placed a plentiful quantity of superior oats. After dinner the horses were taken from the room by the grooms, small tables and chairs were brought in, and the guests sat down to an after-dinner chat as if in a beautiful garden.

FOOD & WAR

1941: At Sea, World War II

The Australian naval slang expression “Matapan stew” refers to a meal concocted of “a multiplicity of odds and ends in the way of meat and vegetables.” The term originated on this day when cooks aboard HMAS *Perth*, working under fire during the Battle of Matapan (in the Mediterranean Sea), put together a scratch dinner for the seamen. In the grand tradition of navies all over the world, a new slang expression was born.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1844: Britain

An early food preservation patent was granted to Robert Davison and William Symington for “a method or methods of drying, seasoning, and hardening wood and other articles, parts of which are applicable to the desiccation of vegetable

substances generally. For this purpose currents of air heated to definite temperatures in a series of pipes placed over a furnace are propelled with high velocity, by means of revolving fans, through and among the mass of wheat, coffee, starch, or other substances to be dried.”

1893: USA

Henry H. Heinz, of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, was granted Design Patent No. D22312 for the distinctive ketchup bottle with octagonal cross section.

1899: USA

Frank M. Peters, of Chicago, Illinois, working for Nabisco, was granted Patent No. 621,974 for a “Method of and Means for Packing Biscuit, Crackers, or the Like” which would “provide an inexpensive package whereby bakery goods . . . may be kept fresh and in proper condition for consumption by effectually excluding moisture therefrom and whereby the goods will be firmly packaged and held and thereby prevented from rattling and breaking in the package.”

FOOD BUSINESS

1991: Beijing, China

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs held a “Connoisseurship Meeting” attended by 120 delegates from forty countries. It was determined that the coconut juice product Yeshu was the only Chinese-manufactured beverage likely to be competitive in the global market.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1756: Sussex, England

Thomas Turner was a village shopkeeper. He kept a diary for many years, and on this day his entry reads:

I went down to Jones, where we drank one bowl of punch and two mugs of bumboo; and I came home again in liquor; Oh! With what horrors does it fill my heart, to think that I should be guilty of doing so, and on a Sunday

too! Let me once more endeavour never, no never to be guilty of the same again.

Bumboo: According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* this is “a liquor composed of rum, sugar, water, and nutmeg.” There is a fascinating account of its use in the British colony of Virginia a few decades after Turner’s account. It was written by “an old English officer” called J. F. D Smyth, who was clearly unimpressed with the manners and lifestyle of American-born estate owners:

The gentleman of fortune rises about nine o’clock; when perhaps he walks as far as his stables, which is seldom more than the distance of fifty yards from his house. After seeing his horses he returns to breakfast, which generally consists of tea or coffee, bread and butter, with very thin slices of venison-ham, or hung-beef. He then lies on a pallet, on the floor, in the coolest room in the house, in his shirt and trowsers only, with a negroe at his head, and another at his feet, to fan him and keep off the flies. Between twelve and one he takes a draught of bumbo, or toddy, a liquor composed of water, sugar, rum, and nutmeg, which is made weak, and kept cool. He dines between two and three, and at every table, whatever else there may be, a ham and greens or cabbage, is always a standing dish. At this meal he drinks as he pleases, of cyder, toddy, punch, port, claret, and madeira. Having drank some few glasses of wine after dinner, he returns to his pallet, with his two blacks to fan him, and continues to drink toddy, or sangaree, the whole afternoon. He does not always drink tea. Between nine and ten in the evening he eats a light supper of milk and fruit, or wine, sugar, and fruit, &c. and almost immediately retires to bed for the night.

1814: London, England

From Lord Byron’s *Letters and Journals*: “Yesterday, dined *tete-a-tete* at the Cocoa with Scrope Davies—sat from six till midnight—drank between us one bottle of champagne and six of claret, neither of which wines ever affect me.”

1842: USA

Charles Dickens was visiting the United States and on this day was en route from Harrisburg to Pittsburgh by canal boat. He describes the system of meals:

At about six o’clock, all the small tables were put together to form one long

table, and everybody sat down to tea, coffee, bread, butter, salmon, shad, liver, steaks, potatoes, pickles, ham, chops, black-puddings, and sausages. “Will you try,” said my opposite neighbour, handing me a dish of potatoes, broken up in milk and butter, “will you try some of these fixings?”

At eight o’clock (next morning), the shelves (i.e bunks) being taken down and put away and the tables joined together, everybody sat down to the tea, coffee, bread, butter, salmon, shad, liver, steak, potatoes, pickles, ham, chops, black-puddings, and sausages, all over again. Some were fond of compounding this variety, and having it all on their plates at once. As each gentleman got through his own personal amount of tea, coffee, bread, butter, salmon, shad, liver, steak, potatoes, pickles, ham, chops, black-puddings, and sausages, he rose up and walked off. When everybody had done with everything, the fragments were cleared away: and one of the waiters appearing anew in the character of a barber, shaved such of the company as desired to be shaved; while the remainder looked on, or yawned over their newspapers. Dinner was breakfast again, without the tea and coffee; and supper and breakfast were identical.

MARCH 29

BOGLE DAY

A *bogle* (*buggle*, *bogel*) is a malevolent Scottish mythological figure. Special attention was paid to propitiating this creature on March 29, which marked the start of spring planting. On this day a small plot was dug and corn planted (*corn* was the generic word for grains; most likely in Scotland it meant oats or barley). This small patch was most carefully tended, as it was believed that if it produced well, the entire crop would be good. The ripe grain from this plot was kept and used to make a special cake to be eaten for supper on Bogle Day the following year.

The bogle cake was variously described as “a large bannock,” “a large cake of oat-or barley-meal, often with notched edges,” and “a flat round scone representing the sun.”

FOOD & WAR

1942: Germany, World War II

Joseph Goebbels, the Reich minister of propaganda, began a weekly newspaper called *Das Reich* in 1941. In the edition of March 29, 1942, he announced a reduction in food rations:

The new cuts in food rations that take effect on 6 April will have a big impact in the household of every citizen. It would be foolish and incorrect to ignore it or make it seem better than it is. The relevant offices have thought long and hard about both the size and necessity of the cut. . . .

We must manage our food supplies with a view to the long term, one that will permit us to wage war to its victorious conclusion. The government knows better than anyone else that reductions in food supplies affect directly the whole population. When it decides they are necessary, one may be sure that there is no other possibility. We, of course, know that it is not exactly a good time for a reduction in rations. Potatoes are in short supply. . . . Vegetables are in short supply, particularly in big cities. In short, we would have preferred to postpone this tough measure for a few months. It was not possible. We do not determine our food policies during the war on their popularity, but rather according to what is reasonable under the conditions, even if it sometimes requires unpleasant decisions. . . . Depending on the next harvest, we may later be able to consider improvements in rations.

No German doubts any longer that we must win the war. What we accept voluntarily today is child's play compared to what would happen to us if we lose. We do not even consider such a possibility. The government does not only want to win, it is working and fighting for it, and has after all the ultimate responsibility for victory as well. It has the duty to do what the situation requires.

The people, however, have every right to insist that the burdens of the war be shared fairly. No one is exempt from the sacrifices that the nation as a whole must bring to win the war. Anyone who interferes with or threatens our war effort deserves the harshest penalties, even the death penalty.

1943: USA, World War II

The rationing of meat, cheese, fats, and canned fish began on this day. These foods were allocated according to the points system. Each family or individual was issued a ration book which was used by the retailer to tally the number of points used.

T-bone steak was eight points per pound, hamburger “beef ground from necks, flanks, shanks, briskets, plates, and miscellaneous beef trimmings and beef fats” was five points per pound. Most fish was seven points per pound, all cheeses were eight points per pound, and fats were five to eight points per pound.



Preparation for points rationing

(Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division [Reproduction number e.g., LC-USE6- D-008750])

FOOD & THE LAW

2011: USA

The Public Patent Foundation, representing thousands of farmers and other interested parties, filed a lawsuit in U.S. federal court against the Monsanto Company on this day. The challenge was an attempt to invalidate Monsanto’s patents on GM seeds and to prevent the company from suing growers whose crops became contaminated with the new GM crops. The grounds for the lawsuit

crops became contaminated with the new GM crops. The grounds for the lawsuit were that patent law disallows any patent that is poisonous to people or the environment and is not useful to society.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1841: Australia

From the journal of Edward John Eyre, on his expedition to cross the western half of the continent of Australia. The party had travelled 180 kilometers without finding fresh water.

In our route along the shore, we had seen immense numbers of fish in the shallow waters, and among the reefs lying off the coast; several dead ones had been picked up, and of these the boys made a feast at night. Our last drop of water was consumed this evening, and we then all lay down to rest, after turning the horses behind the first ridge of the coast, as we could find no grass; and neither the overseer nor I were able to watch them, being both too much worn out with the labours of the day, and our exertions, in searching for water.

1912: Antarctica

Robert Falcon Scott, on the return journey from the South Pole, is presumed to have died on this day or shortly after. His last diary entry was dated March 29.

Since the 21st we have had a continuous gale from W.S.W. and S.W. We had fuel to make two cups of tea apiece and bare food for two days on the 20th. Every day we have been ready to start for our depot 11 miles away, but outside the door of the tent it remains a scene of whirling drift. I do not think we can hope for any better things now. We shall stick it out to the end, but we are getting weaker, of course, and the end cannot be far.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1777: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde. The good cleric was not above buying smuggled tea. Tea smuggling was rife at the time as a way of avoiding

heavy taxes: “Andrews the Smuggler brought me this night about 11 o’clock a bagg of Hyson Tea 6 Pd weight. He frightened us a little by whistling under the Parlour Window just as we were going to bed. I gave him some Geneva and paid him for the tea at 10/6 per Pd.” This amount of tea, had he bought it legally, would have cost the parson about three guineas a pound—six times as much as he paid the smuggler.

Hyson (or Haisven) tea: This was said to be named for a rich East India merchant who first brought it to England. It was green tea “inclining to blue,” with small leaves, tightly rolled.

Geneva: This was gin. Gin was first made in Holland in the seventeenth century. The word comes from Dutch *jenever*, which means “juniper,” a conifer whose berries are used to give gin its particular flavor. It has nothing to do with the Swiss city of the same name.

MARCH 30

FATHER & SON DINNER

1928: Rochelle, New York

The Boy Scouts of America held a father and son dinner on this night, and the menu was as follows:

MESS CALL

—

“AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL”

Sung by all

INVOCATION

Rev. Murray A. Cayley

—

MENU

FRUIT CUP

The cup borrowed from Troop 8

HUNTER'S STEW

With the camp-fire flavour

BAKED FISH

Fresh from Lake [?]

SPAGHETTI a la Troop 12

Knot tying event

PEACHES

Tame [?] variety

ROLLS

Better 'everything

VANILLA ICE CREAM

COFFEE MILK COCOA

FOOD ORGANIZATIONS

1930: USA

The American Culinary Federation (ACF), founded in April 1929, was incorporated on this day. It is today the largest professional chefs' association in North America, with over 22,000 members across the country. It is considered to be the authoritative voice on most aspects of cookery and professionalism in the culinary sphere in the United States.

1936: New York, USA

The first meeting of *Les Amis d'Escoffier* was held in the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. The society was formed by members of the American Culinary Federation in New York City to preserve the culinary heritage of one of the most famous and influential chefs of all time.

The society had a code of firm rules. All members were considered equal, so there were no guests of honor; the napkin was to be tucked into collars (*la Serviette au cou*); there was to be no drunkenness, no smoking, and no talking at the table. The *Serviette au cou* was intended to obscure any evidence of social rank or wealth, in line with the equality of the members, and it became the slogan of the organization.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1841: Australia

From the journal of Edward John Eyre, on his expedition to cross the western half of the continent of Australia. The party were trekking across the Nullarbor plain and were at this point completely out of fresh water.

I took a sponge, and went to try to collect some of the dew which was hanging in spangles upon the grass and shrubs; brushing these with the sponge, I squeezed it, when saturated, into a quart pot, which, in an hour's time, I filled with water. The native boys were occupied in the same way; and by using a handful of fine grass, instead of a sponge, they collected about a quart among them. Having taken the water to the camp, and made it into tea, we divided it amongst the party, and never was a meal more truly relished, although we all ate the last morsel of bread we had with us, and none knew when we might again enjoy either a drink of water, or a mouthful of bread.

Sixteen miles further, at the site now known as Eyre, they dug in the "pure white sand" and "in the last extremity" were saved by the discovery of water at less than 200 centimeters.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1736: America

John Wesley, having arrived in America in early February with the intention of converting the Indians to Christianity, decided on a dietary experiment: “Mr. Delamotte and I began to try whether life might not as well be sustained by one sort as by variety of food. We chose to make the experiment with bread; and were never more vigorous and healthy than while we tasted nothing else.”

1781: England

From James Boswell’s journal of his time with Samuel Johnson, as he prepared a biography of the great man:

On Friday, March 30, I dined with him [Samuel Johnson] at Sir Joshua Reynolds’s, with the Earl of Charlemont, Sir Annesley Stewart, Mr. Eliot of Port-Eliot, Mr. Burke, Dean Marlay, Mr. Langton; a most agreeable day, . . . Mr. Eliot mentioned a curious liquor peculiar to his country, which the Cornish fishermen drink. They call it Mahogany; and it is made of two parts gin, and one part treacle, well beaten together. I begged to have some of it made, which was done with proper skill by Mr. Eliot. I thought it very good liquor; and said it was a counterpart of what is called Athol Porridge in the Highlands of Scotland, which is a mixture of whisky and honey. Johnson said, “that must be a better liquor than the Cornish, for both its component parts are better.” He also observed, “Mahogany must be a modern name; for it is not long since the wood called mahogany was known in this country.” I mentioned his scale of liquors;—claret for boys,—port for men,—brandy for heroes. “Then (said Mr. Burke,) let me have claret: I love to be a boy; to have the careless gaiety of boyish days.” JOHNSON. “I should drink claret too, if it would give me that; but it does not: it neither makes boys men, nor men boys. You’ll be drowned by it, before it has any effect upon you.”

MARCH 31

A SIRLOIN OF BEEF

1573: England

During the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, a “sorloine of byfe” was listed as one of

the items purchased for a dinner for the “Lord Treasurer, Mr Chancellor, and others” on this day.

The word *sirloin* refers to the upper, choicest, part of a loin of beef. The first reference to the word given by the *Oxford English Dictionary* is in 1554, not long before the entry in Queen Elizabeth’s accounts. There is a charming myth about the origin of this name. A king (variously given as Henry VIII or James I) was said to be so pleased with a roast placed before him one day that he promptly took his sword and knighted the roast, saying “Rise, Sir Loin.” The much more prosaic truth is that it comes from the French *sur longe*, which literally means “above the loin.”

FOOD FIRSTS

1989: USA

The first consignment of Japanese blowfish (*fugu*) arrived in the United States on this day, thanks to the success of a campaign by chefs in Japanese restaurants in New York who eventually persuaded the FDA to allow them to import and serve this fish. If improperly prepared, it can cause fatalities due to the presence of an endotoxin in the internal organs (*see* January 16 and September 8).

COMMODORE PERRY IN JAPAN

1854: Japan

Commodore Matthew Perry entertained Japanese dignitaries and officials aboard the *Powhatan* on March 27 (*see* this date) while in Japan on a mission of peace and trade. The courtesy was returned by the Japanese on March 31, immediately after the signing of the Treaty of Kanagawa. Very few from the West had tasted Japanese food at this time, so Perry’s report (which is quite formal in tone) is particularly interesting.

All formal business being now concluded, to the satisfaction of both parties, the Japanese commissioners invited the Commodore and his officers to partake of an entertainment prepared for the occasion.

The tables were spread in the large reception hall. These were wide divans, such as were used for seats, and of the same height. They were covered

such as were used for seats, and of the same height. They were covered with a red-colored crape, and arranged in order according to the rank of the guests and their hosts, an upper table raised somewhat above the rest being appropriated to the Commodore, his superior officers, and the commissioners. When all were seated the servitors brought in a rapid succession of courses, consisting chiefly of thick soups, or rather stews, in most of which fresh fish was a component part. These were served in small earthen bowls or cups, and were brought in upon lacquered stands, about fourteen inches square and ten inches high, and placed, one before each guest, upon the tables. Together with each dish was a supply of soy some other condiment, while throughout there was an abundant quantity, served in peculiar vessels, of the Japanese national liquor, the sake, a sort of whiskey distilled from rice. Various sweetened confections and a multiplicity of cakes were liberally interspersed among the other articles on the tables.

Toward the close of the feast, a plate containing a broiled crawfish, a piece of fried fish of some kind, two or three boiled shrimps, and a small square pudding with something of the consistence of blancmange, was placed before each, with a hint that they were to follow the guests on their return to the ships, and they were accordingly sent and duly received afterward.

FOOD & WAR

1917: England, World War I

The *Weekly Dispatch* carried an article entitled “Food Problems—And A Way Out.” The writer (“Lady Quill”) began by saying: “A nation’s ability to obtain the right sort of peace when the time comes, largely depends upon the readiness of the civil population to help preserve the national resources.” She then went on to give hints on finding what we would now call “wild food, “ and after mentioning plover, rook, jackdaw, moorhen and gull eggs, she gave the following recipe:

Rook Pie.

Writing of rooks reminds me that young rooks make a good pie and one that in country places used to be and I have no doubt still is thought a

that in country places used to be and I have no doubt still is thought a delicacy. The rooks must be young and must be hung for four or five days before being made into a pie. They should be skinned by being cut down the back and the backbone should be removed.

The rooks must be stewed till tender and then placed in a pie-dish with two or three cut hard-boiled eggs, a little flour, and the liquid in which they were stewed. After peppering and salting them and covering the dish with a good shortcrust the pie can be baked in a hot oven.

1945: Germany, World War II

Josef Kramer, the commandant of the camp of Birkenau, was in Munster. It was two weeks before the liberation of the camp at Bergen-Belsen where sixty thousand people were starving. The commandant and his friends and colleagues were still able to avail themselves of food luxuries.

At last I was able to get the tinned meat I wanted (a layer of lard on top and pork underneath). . . . I therefore got 8 heavy tins for myself and Mrs. Glaser. . . . The neighbors finally came with plenty of beef which had been distributed before and so at Eastertide 1945 nobody had to endure hunger in Munster.

This diary entry was written only two weeks before the liberation of Belsen-Belsen.

FUNERAL FOR A STEAK

2001: Italy

Mock funeral rites were held in Tuscany on this day, as Italy was about to become compliant with a European Union order to ban beef on the vertebral bone because of the fear of bovine spongiform encephalitis (BSE, or “mad cow disease”).

The first Italian case of BSE had occurred in January 2001. The order was to be in place for twelve months, but locals feared it would spell the end for the local specialty of *Bistecca fiorentina*.

At the mock funeral women dressed in black and threw flowers at a walnut

AT THE MOCK FUNERAL, WOMEN DRESSED IN BLACK AND THREW FLOWERS at a walled coffin containing a 25-kilogram slab of raw beef being carried away in a hearse. An auction of two hundred steaks raised money for a children's hospital; the celebrity musician Elton John telephoned his support.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1763: Britain

James Boswell, the biographer of Samuel Johnson, wrote in his journal on this day: "Erskine this morning exhibited in a new capacity—that of a landlord. He promised me a breakfast; and a most excellent breakfast did he give, entertaining me not only with plenty of good tea and bread and butter, but with that admirable viand, marmalade."

1848: Australia

The young Annabella Boswell, in her journal of life near Port Macquarie, recorded her preserving efforts for the day:

Made two pineapples into jelly—when peeled they weighed 3 ½ pounds each. The gardener weighed several lately, the heaviest weighing 4lb 1 oz. They are very fine and plentiful but none of us like them. I made the jelly as we do apples, but it never jellied properley, and is more like honey both in colour and substance.

What Anna failed to realize is that raw pineapple contains an enzyme called *bromelian* which prevents gelatin setting. Had she cooked the pineapple thoroughly first to destroy the bromelian, she may have had more success with her preserves.

April

APRIL 1

APRIL FOOL'S DAY

1957: Britain, The Spaghetti Trees of Italy

Possibly the most famous April Fool's prank in history was orchestrated by the BBC on this day. The popular and well-respected journalist Richard Dimbleby, on his regular program *Panorama*, reported on the "spaghetti harvest" in Italy. Workers were shown picking and drying the spaghetti, and the commentary was convincingly authentic. The story was widely believed at the time, and many viewers contacted the BBC asking where they could obtain the trees.

1996: USA

The Taco Bell fast food chain took out full-page advertisements on this day in which they claimed to have bought the Liberty Bell "to help pay down the national debt." Thousands of protests were received before midday, when it was revealed that it was an April Fool's Day prank.

THE HOUSEHOLD OF WILLIAM AND MARY

1689: England

Orders were signed on this day for various aspects of the management of the household of King William and Queen Mary, to commence the first day of April 1689.

The Number of Dyetts and Dishes to be Dayly Served to Their Majesties Table; and to Their Servants.

	Dinner	Supper
To their Majestie's Table	10	8
More Plates,	3	3
To the King's Waiters,	5	4
To the Queen's Waiters,	5	4
To the Maids of Honour,	8	3
To the Chaplains,	5	
To an Officer of the Board attending,	3	
To the Clark of the Kitchen, attending,	1	
To the Master Cook in waiting,	1	
To the King's Pages of the Back Stairs,	2	
To the Queen's Pages of the Back Stairs,	2	
To the Yeomen of the Guard on both sides,	3	
To Dr. Hutton,	1	

To the 5 officers attending at the Cupboard when from
Whitehall,

1

ANNIVERSARY

1755: France

This was the birthday of Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, a lawyer and noted gastronome, and the author of one of the great classic works of gastronomy: *Physiologie du goût, ou Méditation de gastronomie transcendante, ouvrage théorique, historique et à l'ordre du jour* (“The Physiology of Taste, or Meditation on Transcendent Gastronomy, a Work Theoretical, Historical, and Programmed”). The book has never out of print since it was published in 1825.

Many of the aphorisms in the book have entered the culinary lexicon.

- Tell me what you eat and I tell you who you are.
- The destiny of nations depends on the manner in which they nourish themselves.
- The discovery of a new dish confers more happiness on humanity, than the discovery of a new star.
- To receive guests is to take charge of their happiness during the entire time they are under your roof.
- Cooking is one of the oldest arts and one that has rendered us the most important service in civic life.
- The pleasure of the table belongs to all ages, to all conditions, to all countries, and to all eras; it mingles with all other pleasures, and remains at last to console us for their departure.

FOOD BUSINESS

1979: Washington, DC, USA

Restaurant Nora became America's first certified organic restaurant. The restaurant opened in 1979 with a focus on locally produced, seasonal food. The new certification guarantees that 95 percent of the food has been produced by certified organic growers and farmers.

FOOD & THE GOVERNMENT

1979: USA

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) was implemented on this day with the primary purpose of disaster responsiveness. FEMA has established guidelines on daily food and water requirements to assist civilians and organizations in the event that rationing becomes necessary.

FEMA's guidelines recommend that, if possible, a two week's supply of food should be held by a household in case of natural disaster or other emergency. Ideally, the food should be familiar to the family, nutrient dense, and not require refrigeration, special preparation, or cooking.

An emergency supply of bottled water is also recommended by FEMA. The minimum requirement is one quart of water per day, and more for children, nursing mothers, and the ill.

2001: Britain

The Food Standards Agency was set up. The agency website describes its function:

The Food Standards Agency is an independent government department responsible for food safety and hygiene across the UK. We work with businesses to help them produce safe food, and with local authorities to enforce food safety regulations.

Everything we do reflects our vision of "Safer food for the nation." We aim to ensure that food produced or sold in the UK is safe to eat, consumers have the information they need to make informed choices about where and what they eat and that regulation and enforcement is risk-based and focused

on improving public health.

CAVIAR

1998: Zimbabwe

Restrictions to the trade in caviar came into force on this day. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) held in Zimbabwe in June 1997 recognized the seriously reduced numbers of sturgeon in the Caspian Sea (from overfishing, poaching, pollution, and industrial development) and determined that

all international shipments of sturgeon and paddlefish specimens or their parts and products, including caviar, made on or after April 1, 1998, must include a valid CITES export permit, re-export certificate, or pre-Convention certificate, which shows that the CITES treaty is being followed. . . . On the effective date of this policy, the normal shelf life of any caviar imported before April 1, 1998, will have been exceeded by more than 8 months. In addition, it has become evident since April 1, 1998, that the false declaration of caviar as having been acquired before April 1, 1998, is a means of circumventing the CITES treaty. So, we will no longer issue pre-Convention certificates for caviar.

FOOD & RELIGION

1594: London, England

The Jesuit priest John Gerard was at the home of his patron, the Lady Mary Percy at Blackfriars, when the anti-Catholic “searchers” came to find him. Over the next four days they tore the house apart but did not find his hiding place in a space under the floor of a fireplace. He had very little to sustain him during his ordeal.

[D]uring those four days that I lay hid, I had nothing to eat but a biscuit or two and a little quince jelly, which my hostess had at hand and gave me as I was going in. . . . The mistress of the house too had eaten nothing whatever during the whole time, not only to share my distress, and to try on herself how long I could live without food, but chiefly to draw down the mercy of

God on me, herself, and her family, by this fasting and prayer. Indeed her face was so changed when I came out, that she seemed quite another woman, and I should not have known her but for her voice and her dress.

SPAMARAMA

1978: Austin, Texas, USA

The first SPAMARAMA was held on this day. The cook-off was originally called the Pandemonious Potted Pork Festival by both amateur and professional chefs. Naturally, all dishes had to contain SPAM™. The judges were required to taste the dishes, although they had the right to ask the contestant to take a bite first. Unique for a cook-off, there was a category for Worst Tasting.

The creativity of contestants seemed to know no bounds, with such dishes as Spangator Gumbo, Velvet Hog Wedding Cake, SPAM™ Pad Thai, GuacaSPAMole, and SPAMalama Ding Dong.

Sadly, for reasons that are unclear, the festival has not been held since 2007.

FOOD & WAR

1942: Australia, World War II

Rationing of tea began. Initially, customers had to register with a specific supplier, but this was later changed to rationing by coupon.

1945: Munster, Germany, World War II

From the diary of Josef Kramer, the commandant of the prison camp of Birkenau, two weeks before the liberation of the camp at Bergen-Belsen:

We had a magnificent dinner today. Delicious beef broth with noodles, beans with bacon, potatoes, apple sauce and red whortleberries. For breakfast we had cold ham, bread and butter with real coffee and plenty of whole milk. At 4 P.M. [I was] told that all sorts of fine things could be had free from the magazine of the military barracks in the “Univ-Sportzplatz” such as peas, biscuits, noodles *etc.* I got to work filling . . . two big air-raid

shelter paper bags which I had brought.”

UNDERWATER CANS

1865: USA

The steamboat *Bertrand* was sailing up the Missouri River on this day, laden with supplies worth \$300,000 intended for the gold fields of Montana, when it struck a snag and sank in ten feet of water. Over a century later, the wreck of the *Bertrand* was discovered, and a large quantity of canned food was retrieved. In 1974, the contents of the cans were tested at the National Food Processors Association (NFPA). Although the overall quality of the food had deteriorated and there was some vitamin loss, it was found to be as safe to eat as the day it was canned.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769: Aboard Ship

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks:

“*South Sea*” Something better today. As my complaint has something in it that at least puts me in mind of the scurvy I took up the lemon Juice put up by Dr Hulmes direction and found that which was concentrated by evaporating 6 Galls into less than 2 has kept as well as any thing could do. The small Cagg in which was lemon juice with one fifth of brandy was also very good tho large part of it had leak’d out by some fault in the Cagg; this therefore I began to make use of immediately drinking very weak punch made with it for my common liquor.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1662: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

At noon my wife and . . . to the Wardrobe, where my Lady and company had almost dined. We sat down and dined. . . . I took them to Islington, and

then, after a walk in the fields, I took them to the great cheese-cake house and entertained them, and so home, and after an hour's stay with my Lady, their coach carried us home, and so weary to bed.

1842: USA

Charles Dickens was travelling on the steamboat *Messenger* from Pittsburgh to Cincinnati.

We are to be on board the *Messenger* three days: arriving at Cincinnati (barring accidents) on Monday morning. There are three meals a day. Breakfast at seven, dinner at half-past twelve, supper about six. At each, there are a great many small dishes and plates upon the table, with very little in them; so that although there is every appearance of a mighty "spread," there is seldom really more than a joint: except for those who fancy slices of beet-root, shreds of dried beef, complicated entanglements of yellow pickle; maize, Indian corn, apple-sauce, and pumpkin. Some people fancy all these little dainties together (and sweet preserves beside), by way of relish to their roast pig. They are generally those dyspeptic ladies and gentlemen who eat unheard-of quantities of hot corn bread (almost as good for the digestion as a kneaded pin-cushion), for breakfast, and for supper. Those who do not observe this custom, and who help themselves several times instead, usually suck their knives and forks meditatively, until they have decided what to take next: then pull them out of their mouths: put them in the dish; help themselves; and fall to work again. At dinner, there is nothing to drink upon the table, but great jugs full of cold water. Nobody says anything, at any meal, to anybody. All the passengers are very dismal, and seem to have tremendous secrets weighing on their minds. There is no conversation, no laughter, no cheerfulness, no sociality, except in spitting; and that is done in silent fellowship round the stove, when the meal is over. Every man sits down, dull and languid; swallows his fare as if breakfasts, dinners, and suppers, were necessities of nature never to be coupled with recreation or enjoyment; and having bolted his food in a gloomy silence, bolts himself, in the same state. But for these animal observances, you might suppose the whole male portion of the company to be the melancholy ghosts of departed book-keepers, who had fallen dead at the desk: such is their weary air of business and calculation. Undertakers on duty would be sprightly beside them; and a collation of funeral-baked meats, in

comparison with these meals, would be a sparkling festivity.

APRIL 2

FEAST DAY OF SAINT FRANCIS OF PAOLA

Francis of Paola was the founder of the religious order of friars known as the Order of Minims, in 1507. In addition to the three usual monastic vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience, the Minims also follow “a Lenten way of life” all year, that is, they abstain from eggs, milk, and all other animal products. The word was not coined at the time, but today we would call this a vegan diet.

FOOD & TRADE

1595: Holland

The first Dutch tentative exploratory and trade voyages to Asia began on this day, with the setting sail of a small fleet of four ships—*Mauritius*, *Hollandia*, *Amsterdam*, and *Duyfken*. One ship and 162 men were lost, but the expedition was a modest commercial success with the trade routes opened and the contacts established. The success led to the monopoly of Dutch trade in the area and can be said to be the beginning of the Dutch East India Company, although this was not formalized until March 20, 1602 (and continued until December 31, 1799).

EASTER SUNDAY

1290: England

Bishop Richard de Swinfield of Hereford celebrated Easter at Colwall. There were seventy extra horses in the stables, indicating a large number of guests. The household accounts give the tally for the three meals of the day.

On Easter Day. Bread. Eleven sextaries of Bosbury wine. Beer, already accounted for. Item, two carcasses and a half of salt beef from the Bosbury larder. One bacon from the same. One boar from the household stock, though not sound, already accounted for. In one live ox from Ledbury, 16s. In one carcasse of fresh beef, by Baseville, 10s.10d. In three pigs, 5s.3d. In six calves 9s 2d In nine kids by Baseville 3s 2½d Item in twelve kids

...carves, 5s. In milk, by Baseville, 3d. In twelve kids, by the bailiff of Eastnor, 5s., In six capons, 12d. In eighty pigeons, by Baseville, 19d. In sixty-eight pigeons, from the Bosbury manor, 17d. Item, two pigs, one boar, six capons, six kids, presents. Out of these, one carcass, one quarter of fresh beef, three pigs, one calf and a half, five kids, sixty pigeons. Item, three fat deer from the store. In four thousand eggs, 3s.8d. In milk, by Basseville, 3d. In cheese, 12½ d. In flour, 6d. In suet, 2s. 6d. In three bushels of salt, 16d. Hay from the manor for seventy horses. In their feed, four quarters seven bushels of oats, already accounted for. The sum 62s. 9d.

TURKEY TACTICS

1819: USA

The periodical *American Farmer* was founded by John Skinner. One of the articles published during the first year was on the practice of using turkeys to control the tobacco hornworm.

I state, from good authority, that several thousand turkeys may be hired out in Prince George's county, during the next summer, at the rate of twenty-five cents apiece per month and found. They will be returned when their work is done, and if they are overworked or die from any other cause, they will be paid for at the rate of seventy-five cents each.

The practice served a second purpose. After the harvest, the well-fed turkeys were well on the way to being nicely fattened for Christmas.

EASTER EGG ROLL

1879: Washington, DC, USA



White House Easter egg roll

(Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division [Reproduction number e.g., LC-USZ62-94495])

President Rutherford B. Hayes and his wife, Lucy, instigated the annual Easter Monday Easter Egg Roll on the White House lawn. There had been a tradition for many years of egg-rolling on the lawns of Capitol Hill, but Congress refused to permit this, or any other similar activity, to continue in 1878. Rather than disappoint the children of Washington, the president stepped in with an alternative.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1770: Australia

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks:

“to New South Wales” Our malt having turnd out so indifferent that the Surgeon made little use of it a method was thought of some weeks ago to bring it into use, which was to make as strong a wort with it as possible and in this boil the wheat which is servd to the People for breakfast. It made a mess far from unpleasant which the people soon grew very fond of: myself who have for many months constantly breakfasted upon the same wheat as the people, either did or at least thought that I receivd great benefit from the

use of this mess, it totally banishd in me that troublesome Costiveness which I believe most people are subject to when at sea. Whether or no this is a more beneficial method of administering wort as a preventative than the common must be left to the faculty, especially that excellent surgeon Mr McBride whose ingenious treatise on the sea scurvy can never be enough commended. For my own part I should be inclind to beleive that the salubrious qualities of the wort which arise from fermentation might in some degree at least be communicated to the wheat when thouroughly saturated with its particles, which would consequently acquire a virtue similar to that of fresh vegetables, the most powerfull resisters of Sea scurvy known.

1806: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day Meriwether Lewis wrote: “[F]or we now view the horses as our only certain resource for food, nor do we look forward to it with any detestation or horror [horror], so soon is the mind which is occupyed with any interesting object, reconciled to it’s situation.”

1827: Timbuktu

René Caillé was on the final leg of his journey to Timbuktu.

On the morning of the 2nd he [the sheriff] sent for me to his house. I took with me my bag, which he ordered one of his people to carry to the canoe, as well as my package of merchandise. He mixed together in my presence a good deal of millet flour and honey. This preparation was intended to be put into water for my drink; and I found it very useful on my passage, during which I was extremely ill-used, as will be seen in the sequel. The young Moor, whom I have already mentioned and to whom I made a present of a pair of scissors, gave me a large supply of wheaten bread, which had been dried in an oven, and told me how it was to be eaten; they first soak it in water and then mix it with a good deal of butter and honey.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1630: At Sea

From the journal of John Winthrop, aboard the *Arbella* en route to start a new colony in America:

We kept a fast aboard our ship and the *Talbot*. The wind continued still very high at W and S and rainy. In the time of our fast, two of our landsmen pierced a rundlet of strong water (*Rum*), and stole some of it, for which we laid them in bolts all the night, and the next morning the principal was openly whipped, and both kept with bread and water that day.

APRIL 3

1967: Korea

A state dinner was given on this day by the prime minister of the Republic of Korea and Mrs. II Kwon Chung in honor of His Excellency the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand and Thanpuying Chongkal Kittikachorn. The menu is interesting in that, at the meeting of the leaders of these two Asian nations, the menu is written in English and has only the slightest nod to the national cuisine of the host.

MENU

WINE

Filet of Sole in Aspic

White Wine

Potato Salad

Zeller Schwarze, Katz, 1961 Chicken Soup w / Ginseng

Nierstein am Rhein

BULKO-KEE

Germany

(Filet of Beef Korean Style)

Red Wine

French Fried Potatoes

Paviemacquin Saint Emilion Buttered Spinaches

France

Vichy Carrots

Champagne

Mixed Vegetable Salad

Piper Heidsieck (Rheims) w / Mustard Sauce

France Rolls and Butter

Frozen Sultana roll

FOOD & WAR

1940: Britain, World War II

Frederick James Marquis, first Earl of Woolton, became the second wartime minister for food, in a cabinet reshuffle. He formed a good working relationship with his scientific adviser, Jack Drummond, and was enormously popular with the general public. The result of the partnership was that the British public as a whole was better nourished than it had ever been, in spite of rationing.

Woolton managed to get the British to accept and comply with rationing because he was not a faceless bureaucrat or figurehead. He was enormously popular—probably because he had the common touch—and he made many radio announcements personally. A meatless dish was invented and named after him by a chef at the Savoy Hotel; it was jokingly referred to by a colleague of Lord Woolton as “just like a steak and kidney pie—without the steak and kidney.”

Woolton Pie

From *Food Facts for the Kitchen Front*

- Pastry from: 4 oz flour, 2 oz cooked sieved potato, ½ tsp baking powder, ½ tsp salt, 1 oz margarine, cold water to mix.
- Filling from: 6 oz cooked chopped spinach, or cabbage, or carrots, or a good mixture of vegetables, ½ oz margarine, ½ oz flour, ½ pint milk, 2 teas chopped parsley.

Line the flan tin with pastry, prick well with a fork, and bake in a fairly hot oven from 20-30 minutes.

Melt the margarine. stir in the flour and allow the two to blend together for

a minute or two. Add the milk gradually and allow to come to a boil, stirring smoothly. Season, and add the chopped parsley.

Stir in the vegetables, and when the pastry is cooked, turn in the mixture and garnish with peas or grated carrot. Return to the oven for five to ten minutes, and serve very hot.

1944: Amsterdam, Holland, World War II

From the diary of Anne Frank:

In the twenty one months that we've spent here we have been through a good many "food cycles" . . . periods in which one has nothing else to eat but one particular dish or kind of vegetable. We had nothing but endive for a long time, day in, day out, endive with sand, endive without sand, stew with endive, boiled or "en casserole;" then it was spinach, and after that followed kohlrabi, salsify, cucumbers, tomatoes, sauerkraut, etc., each according to the season.

FINE DINING ABOARD A FRENCH SHIP

1690: At Sea

Robert Challes, the "King's writer," was aboard the French ship *L'Ecueil* (see March 2). A long calms spell allowed the admiral and the officers of the flagship to dine together. The meal was apparently planned by Challes.

[A] compote of twelve pigeons, four ox tongues, and a ham formed the entree whilst waiting for the soup. Soup was followed by tripe, after which came sucking pig, supported by two turkeys, a goose, and a dozen chickens. Dessert consisted of a ham whether a fresh one or the remains of the previous one is not stated a duck pie, gruyere and Dutch cheese, with two salads. At the high table wine of Cahors is drunk, and at the others, graves and Bordeaux Cahors, as Challes observes reverently, not being a wine to offer to the first comer. All drinks were unrationed for the day, both for crew and after-guard, the former drinking Nantes and Anjou.

—*The Splendid Century Life in the France of Louis XIV* (1957), W. H.

Lewis

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1841: Australia

From the journal of John Eyre and his party on their journey from Adelaide to Western Australia: “Our mutton (excepting the last sheep) being all used on the 4th, we were reduced to our daily allowance of half a pound of flour each, without any meat.”

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt’s journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia: “The small Acacia tree of Expedition Range was frequently seen in the forest, and was covered with an amber-coloured gum, that was eatable, but tasteless.”

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1811: USA

From the *Journal of a Voyage up the Missouri River in 1811* by Henry Marie Brackenridge:

In the course of this evening, had as much reason to admire the dexterity of our Canadians and Creoles, as I had before to condemn their frivolity. I believe an American could not be brought to support with patience the fatiguing labors, and submission, which these men endure. At this season, when the water is exceedingly cold, they leap in without a moment’s hesitation. Their food consists of lied corn homony for breakfast, a slice of fat pork and a biscuit for dinner, and a pot of mush for supper, with a pound of tallow in it. Yet this is better than the common fair; but we were about to make an extraordinary voyage, the additional expense was not regarded.

APRIL 4

DINNER IN A RUSSIAN FACTORY

1831: Russia

Charles Colville visited a number of factories during his visit to Russia in 1831. He later published an account of his travels entitled *Narrative of a Visit to the Courts of Russia and Sweden: In the Years 1830 and 1831*, and in it he wrote of the dinner for a thousand workers at a cotton and hemp manufactory:

We attended at twelve o'clock the dinner of the whole factory, in an immense long hall divided in the middle lengthways by a screen, to separate the adult males from the boys and girls, who dined at two distinct tables. Previous to sitting down, a long hymn was sung by the whole thousand voices, among whom were some fine basse tailles.

The dinner consisted of excellent pea soup, which we tasted, and gruel, being Lent; but the convalescents, who sat at the lower end of their respective tables, had meat in their "stchy," or cabbage-soup; rye bread, and quass in abundance, completed the repast.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1828: Amsterdam, Holland

Casparus (Caspar) van Houten (father of Coenraad) of Amsterdam received a patent for a hydraulic press which allowed for a greater extraction of cocoa butter from the mass. From 53 percent cocoa butter in ground beans, the press allows a reduction to 27 percent. The resulting lower butterfat "press cake" could then be ground up to form cocoa powder.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

1932: USA

Professor C. G. King of the University of Pittsburgh announced that his laboratory had finally isolated "Vitamine C" on this day.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines a vitamin as

Any of a diverse group of organic compounds of which small quantities are needed in the diet because they have a distinct biochemical role, often as coenzymes, and cannot be adequately synthesized by the body, so that in most cases a deficiency produces characteristic symptoms or disease.

The word *vitamin*[e] was coined in 1912 by Casimir Funk, a Polish American biochemist at the Lister Institute of Preventive Medicine. In the *Journal of State Medicine*, he explained his concept of vitamin[e]s:

It is now known that all these diseases, with the exception of pellagra, can be prevented and cured by the addition of certain preventive substances; the deficient substances, which are of the nature of organic bases, we will call “vitamines”; and we will speak of a beri-beri or scurvy vitamine, which means a substance preventing the special disease.

FOOD IN SPACE

1983: USA

When the *Challenger* space shuttle was launched on April 4, 1983, it carried a special payload provided by the Park Seeds Company—twenty-five pounds of seed from forty different fruits and vegetables. After the seeds were returned to Earth, the company’s researchers set about investigating the effects, if any, of the radiation and extreme temperatures in space on the seeds. The conclusion was that they did not appear to have suffered any adverse effects at all.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1861: Australia

From John McDouall Stuart’s journal of his fifth expedition into the inland of the continent:

The Wicksteed, Reynolds Range. Started at 7.40 a.m. to cross the range, bearing to Mount Freeling 312 degrees. At 1.30 p.m. crossed the range, and arrived at the creek, camping at the same place as I did on my previous journey, and finding water and feed abundant. I have named this creek the Woodforde, after Dr. Woodforde, of Adelaide. After crossing the range, we

found the bean-tree in blossom; it was magnificent. I have obtained a specimen of it; also some beans, a number of which were of a cream colour; we have roasted a few of them, and find that they make very good coffee.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1663: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys. He described on this day his annual celebration of the “cutting of the stone”—a surgical operation for the removal of a bladder stone:

This being my feast, in lieu of what I should have had a few days ago, for my cutting of the Stone . . . Very merry before, at, and after dinner, and the more for that my dinner was great and most neatly dressed by our own only mayde. We had a Fricasse of rabbits and chicken—a leg of mutton boiled—three carps in a dish—a great dish of a side of lamb—a dish roasted pigeons—a dish of four lobsters—three tarts—a Lampry pie, a most rare pie—a dish of anchovies—good wine of several sorts; and all things mightly and noble to my great content.

1857: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau. He was visiting Cape Cod on this day.

Walk down the shore of the river. A Dutchman pushes out in his skiff after quahogs. He also took his eel-spear, thinking to try for eels if he could not get quahogs, for, owing to the late cold weather, they might still be buried in the mud. I saw him raking up the quahogs on the flats at high tide, in two or three feet of water. He used a sort of coarse, long-pronged hoe. Keeps anchoring on the flats and searches for a clam on the bottom with his eye, then rakes it up and picks it off his rake.

Quahog: an edible clam, also called the hard clam (*Mercenaria mercenaria*).

APRIL 5

FOOD & THE LAW

1764: America

The British Parliament passed the American Revenue Act, or “Sugar Act.” This was a modification and strengthening of the ineffective Sugar and Molasses Act of 1733, and was intended to end the smuggling of sugar and molasses from non-British Caribbean sources into American colonies—something at which the colonials were expert.

The preamble to the act stated:

It is expedient that new provisions and regulations should be established for improving the revenue of this Kingdom . . . and . . . it is just and necessary that a revenue should be raised . . . for defraying the expenses of defending, protecting, and securing the same.

The act was, of course, highly unpopular in the American colonies, and although duties were lowered two years later, it acted as one more spur to the revolutionary movement.

COSTS & MEASURES

1440: England, When a “Hundred” Is Not a Hundred

The Brodhull Court was a regulatory body in the important fishing center of Yarmouth (one of the Cinque Ports). At a meeting on this day, the Court made some specifications in respect of fish sales: “Hearings [herrings] are sold freshe by the meise, which is five hundred, eche hundred contayning vjxx.” That is, a “hundred” of herrings was actually 120 herrings. This most likely originated in the Old Norse word *hundrath*, which meant 120. The term *long hundred* was used in reference to various commodities to indicate a number greater than 100. It was not always specified as “long,” however, so purchasers and accountants at the time needed to know what it indicated in the specific circumstances, which varied from time to time and item to item.

The term most commonly indicated six score, that is, 120, as in the herring count given at Brodhull. A reference in the Household Ordinances of Edward II (1284–1327) noted, again in reference to fish, “Of somme manner of fish the hundred containeth six score, and of some other sort, nine score.” In 1688, another reference says “Ling, Cod, or Haberdine, have 124 to the Hundred.” It

could even mean as much as nine score, or 180. Other items commonly counted in long hundreds were eggs (120), sheep in some areas (106), dried salt fish (160), and onions and garlic (225, made up of fifteen “ropes” of fifteen heads each).

A *meise* (or *mease*, *maze*, etc.) referred to fish, particularly herrings. It commonly indicated five long hundreds, or a total of 620 fish as in the example above, but could vary from 500 to 630. The word also indicated a container holding this number.

FOOD & WAR

1940: Britain, World War II, the Kitchen Front

The newly appointed minister of food, Lord Woolton, addressed a meeting of local authorities and voluntary organizations on this day to launch a campaign called the Kitchen Front. The aim was to guide the public, particularly the housewife, on how to manage within the wartime rationing system.

I, and all those who have joined the national defense service of the Ministry of Food, are going to try to give you security for your food supplies in the worst days that may come to us. If it is necessary in order to secure this call upon the people of this country in these days when we are not subject to immediate danger to make sacrifices or to change their habits, I shall make that call without apology, without hesitation, and without fear of the results.
...

Today, in my first speech as Minister of Food, I am going to tell them. I am going to venture at the outset of my work to call on the women of England to mobilize themselves on the Kitchen Front. I doesn't sound romantic; it doesn't sound grand; it isn't dangerous work—but it is vital to our victory.

I want the women of England to go into training for the days which may come when the whole staying power of the nation will depend on them being able to keep up the energy and spirits of the industrial workers of this country by feeding them sufficiently when supplies are difficult, when things they have been accustomed to eat and to use in cooking are no longer available. I beg them not to put off the day when they begin to think of these things . . . food is stored, enough of it to make Hitler, if he were a

sensible and level-headed man, begin to wonder.

We have to see that in the emergency which may come, it can be distributed properly, even though the normal channels of distribution may be destroyed. We have to experiment now, when it is not necessary, so that we can be ready. We cannot be carefree because we have got the food; we must husband it, and while we are in this happy position we must consider and prepare for the future, looking at it at the worst. That is what I want to mobilize the women of this country to do. I want them to consider how to do without things, and how to use the food we have to the best advantage.

1945: USA, World War II

The *New York Times* ran an article on a wartime variation of the doughnut.

Blitz Hits Doughnut: Salvation Army is Making Them With Star-Shaped Hole Now.

The Salvation Army, which introduced doughnuts to the American doughboy in the first World War, yesterday made the startling disclosure that it had forsaken the round-holed doughnut for a more modern doughnut with star-shaped holes. The Salvation Army will introduce these new cakes as well as instructions in the art of dunking at training camps throughout the country.

The disclosure was made yesterday morning as fifty cadets were being taught how to make and serve doughnuts and coffee in training camps and canteens at the Salvation Army Training College.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1806: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day John Ordway wrote:

[G]reat numbers of Savages visited the Camp continually Since we have lay at this Camp, who were passing down with their familys from the country above into the vally of Columbia in Search of food. they inform us that the

natives above the great falls have no provisions and many are dieing with hunger. this information has been so repeatedly given by different parties of Indians that it does not admit of any doubt and is the cause of our delay in this neighbourhood for the purpose of procureing as much dried Elk meat as will last us through the Columbia plains in which we do not expect to find any thing to kill &C.

1841: Australia

From the journal of Edward John Eyre (1815–1901) of his expedition into the inland of Australia:

On the 5th, the overseer and one of the native boys got ready to go back for some of the stores and other things we had abandoned, forty-seven miles away. As they were likely to have severe exercise, and to be away for four days, I gave them five pounds extra of flour above their daily allowance, together with the wallabie which I had shot, and which had not yet been used; they drove before them three horses to carry their supply of water, and bring back the things sent for.

In the evening I noticed the native boys looking more woe-begone and hungry than usual. Heretofore, since our mutton was consumed, they had helped out their daily half-pound of flour, with the roasted roots of the gum-scrub, but to-day they had been too busy to get any, and I was obliged to give to each a piece of bread beyond the regular allowance. It was pitiable to see them craving for food, and not to have the power of satisfying them; they were young and had large appetites, and never having been accustomed to any restraint of this nature, scarcity of food was the more sensibly felt, especially as they could not comprehend the necessity that compelled us to hoard with greater care than a miser does his gold, the little stock of provisions which we yet had left.

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

The country was very ridgy and hilly; and we found it exceedingly difficult to proceed along the river. We observed the poplar-gum again in the open

forest, and a fine drooping loranthus growing on it. Pandanus was also very frequent, in clusters from three to eight trees. The clustered fig-tree gave us an ample supply of fruit, which, however, was not perfectly mellow.

1854: Africa

David Livingstone, on his great trans-African journey, had crossed the River Quango into Portuguese territory the previous day. He had been ill with a fever and was glad to escape the “petty tyrants” in the form of local chiefs. He was pleasantly surprised by the hospitality of a local Portuguese militia man, Cypriano, who had helped him the previous day.

On the morning of the 5th Cypriano generously supplied my men with pumpkins and maize, and then invited me to breakfast, which consisted of ground-nuts and roasted maize, then boiled manioc roots and ground-nuts, with guavas and honey as a dessert. I felt sincerely grateful for this magnificent breakfast.

At dinner Cypriano was equally bountiful, and several of his friends joined us in doing justice to his hospitality. Before eating, all had water poured on the hands by a female slave to wash them. One of the guests cut up a fowl with a knife and fork. Neither forks nor spoons were used in eating. The repast was partaken of with decency and good manners, and concluded by washing the hands as at first.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1669: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

To the Mulberry garden, where Sheres is to treat us with a Spanish *Olio* by a cook of his acquaintance that is there, that was with my Lord in Spain. And without any other company, he did do it, and mighty nobly; and the *Olio* was indeed a noble dish, such as I never saw better, or any more of. . . . So we left other things that would keep till night for a collation.

Collation: a light, informal meal.

Olio (Olla): from the Spanish *olla podrida*, a spiced stew of meat and vegetables. Olios started to appear in the mid-seventeenth century in England, and were seen as very exotic and fashionable fare. In English interpretations of the dish there was sometimes a great number and variety of ingredients, as can be seen by the recipe below.

To Make an Olio Podrida

Take a pipkin or pot of some three gallons, fill it with fair water and set it over a fire of Charcoals, and put in first your hardest meats, a Rump of Beef, Bolonia Sausages, Neats Tongues, two dry and two green, boiled and larded, about two hours after the pot is boiled and scummed: put in more presently after your Beef is scummed, Mutton, Venison, Pork, Bacon, all the aforesaid in gubbins, as big as Ducks Egg, in equal pieces, put in also Carrots, Turnips, Onions, and Cabbage, in good big pieces as big as your meat, a faggot of sweet herbs well bound up, and some whole Spinedge, Sorrel, Burradge, Endive, Marigolds and other good Pot hearbs a little chopped, and sometimes French Barley, or Lupins green or dry.

Then a little before you dish out your Olio, put to your pot Cloves, Mace, Saffron
&c.

Then next have divers Fowls; as first,

A Goose, or Turkey, two Capons, two Ducks, two Pheasants, two Widgeons, four Partridges, four Stockdoves, four Teals, eight Snites, twenty four Quails, forty-eight Larks.

Boil the aforesaid Fowls in water and salt in a pan, pipkin or pot, &c.

Then have, *Bread, Marrow, Bottoms of Artichocks, Yolks of hard Eggs, Large Mace, Chestnuts boil'd and blancht, two Collyflowers, Saffron.*

And stew these in a pipkin together, being ready clenged with some good sweet butter, a little white wine, and strong broth.

Some other times for variety you may use Beets, Potato's Skirrets, Pistaches, Pine Apple seed, or Almonds, Pougarnet, and Lemons.

Next to dish your Olio, dish first your Beef, Veal, or Pork, then your

Now to dish your Olio, dish first your Beef, veal, or Pork; then your Venison, and Mutton, Tongues, Sausage, and Roots over all.

Then next your largest Fowl, Land Fowl, or Sea Fowl, as at first, a Goose or Turkey, two Capons, two Pheasants, four Ducks, four Widgeons, sour Stockdoves, four Partridges, eight Teals, twelve Snites, twenty-four Quails, forty eight Larks, &c.

Then broth it, and put on your pipkin of Collyflowers, Artichocks, Chestnuts, some Sweetbreads fried, Yolks of hard Eggs, then Marrow boil'd in strong broth or water, large Mace, Saffron, Pistaches, and all the foresaid things being finely stewed up, and some red Beets overall; slic't Lemons, and Lemon peels whole, and run over it with beaten butter.

—*The Accomplish't Cook* (1660), by Robert May

APRIL 6

ANCIENT BISON MEAT STEW

1984: Alaska, USA

A group of paleontologists who had been examining the 30,000-year-old remains of a frozen bison decided on this day to see if its flesh was still edible. One of the intrepid guests was the palaeobiologist R. Dale Guthrie, who later wrote of the event:

To climax and celebrate Eirik Granqvist's [the taxidermist] work with Blue Babe, we had a bison stew dinner for him and for Bjorn Kurten, who was giving a guest lecture at the University of Alaska that week. A small part of the mummy's neck was diced and simmered in a pot of stock and vegetables. We had Blue Babe for dinner. The meat was well aged but still a little tough, and it gave the stew a strong Pleistocene aroma, but nobody there would have dared miss it.

The meat in its abdomen had spoiled before the bison was completely frozen. But in the neck area small pieces of meat were found attached to the skull. The lions had left so little there that it had frozen through while the meat was still fresh. When it thawed it gave off an unmistakable beef

aroma, not unpleasantly mixed with a faint smell of the earth in which it was found, with a touch of mushroom. About a dozen of us gathered . . . on April 6, 1984, to partake of *Bison priscus* stew. The taste was delicious, and none of us suffered any ill effects from the meal.

AN INFAMOUS BANQUET

1459: Brasov, Romania

It is said that the infamous banquet of Vlad the Impaler (Vlad Tepes) took place on this day. It was Easter, and after the church service, Vlad's militia rounded up his enemies, who were most of the populace. They were taken outside the city walls and impaled on stakes set in concentric circles, the highest-ranking people in the center. Vlad, so the story goes, then sat down in the center and enjoyed a fine banquet.

FOOD & THE LAW

1930: India

The British had imposed taxes on salt in India since the earliest days of the Empire. The East India Company greatly increased the tax when it began to take control of the various provinces, and these remained in force after the British government took over in 1858. The salt monopoly was strongly opposed by the Indian public and leaders, and increasing opposition to it was a feature of the growing Indian independence movement. On January 26, Mahatma Ghandi began a 240-mile march to the coastal village of Dandi. At 6:30 am on April 6, 1930, he picked up (harvested) some grains of salt without paying tax. The act triggered a huge wave of other acts of civil disobedience and was pivotal in mobilizing Indians in the move toward independence.

1867: New York State, USA

Fishing laws were passed to protect several species of freshwater fish. The new laws stated that it was prohibited

to have in possession on exposure for sale—any speckled brook-trout, or spotted trout, or lake trout, between the first day of September and the first

day of March, or any salmon trout, or any muscalonge, between the first day of December and the first day of April, in each and every year, under a fine of five dollars for each fish so taken or had in possession. . . . [Also that] No person or persons shall take any salmon trout, save in the waters of Lake Erie and Lake Ontario; or any speckled brook-trout, or speckled river-trout or lake-trout, or muscalonge, in any of the waters of this State at any time, save with hook and line, under a fine of two dollars for each fish so taken.

FOOD FIRSTS

1954: USA

C. A. Swanson's *TV Brand Frozen Dinners* went on sale on this day and became an almost instant success. The first meal consisted of an aluminum tray of roast turkey with cornbread dressing, gravy, sweet potatoes, and peas and sold for 98 cents. These were not the first individual frozen dinners. The concept had been used since 1945 for in-flight airplane use and on a small scale elsewhere, but Swanson's was the first to make them on a nation-wide commercial scale for the home market and to use the name.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1938: USA

Du Pont company chemist Roy Plunkett and technician Jack Rebok were working on a piece of refrigeration equipment which had broken down and noticed a "slippery polymer" material on the components. They could have just ignored it and cleaned it off, but in the mode of true scientific thought were immediately intrigued and quickly realized its potential. The material became Teflon, and frying pans were never the same again.

MUSTARD

1732: USA

Benjamin Franklin's newspaper, the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, carried an early

advertisement for mustard on this day.

Choice Flour of Mustard-Seed, in Bottles, very convenient for such as go to Sea; to a little of which if you put hot Water, and stop it up close, you will have strong Mustard, fit to use, in 15 minutes. Sold at the New Printing-Office near the Market, at 1s. per Bot.

FOOD AND WAR

1942: Germany, World War II

The reduced food rations outlined by Joseph Goebbels, the Reich minister of propaganda in Nazi Germany, in his weekly bulletin *Das Reich* on March 29 (see this date) went into effect on this day. Before this date, civilian rations in Germany consisted of the following:

- 10,600 grams of bread per week = 353.33 grams per day, or 12.5 ounces
- 2000 grams of general food stuffs = 66.66 grams per day, or 2.3 ounces
- 900 grams of sugar = 1.06 ounces per day

After the changes of April and May, the amounts were reduced to:

- 8000 grams of bread (about a half loaf a day)
- 1200 grams of meat (less than 1/10 of a pound of meat per day)
- 600 grams of general foods
- 130 grams of sugar

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1800: Venezuela

From the journal of Baron von Humbolt, travelling along the Orinoco:

On the 6th of April, whilst continuing to ascend the Orinoco, first

southward and then to south-west, we perceived the southern side of the Serrania, or chain of the mountains of Encaramada. . . . On the 6th of April, whilst continuing to ascend the Orinoco, first southward and then to south-west, we perceived the southern side of the Serrania, or chain of the mountains of Encaramada. . . . A fresh north-east breeze carried us full-sail towards the Boca de la Tortuga. We landed, at eleven in the morning, on an island which the Indians of the Missions of Uruana considered as their property, and which lies in the middle of the river. This island is celebrated for the turtle fishery, or, as they say here, the *cosecha*, the harvest [of eggs,] that takes place annually. We here found an assemblage of Indians, encamped under huts made of palm-leaves. This encampment contained more than three hundred persons. . . . We made the tour of the island, accompanied by the missionary and by a pulpero, who boasted of having, for ten successive years, visited the camp of the Indians, and attended the turtle-fishery. We were on a plain of sand perfectly smooth; and were told that, as far as we could see along the beach, turtles' eggs were concealed under a layer of earth. The missionary carried a long pole in his hand. He showed us, that by means of this pole, the extent of the stratum of eggs could be determined as accurately as the miner determines the limits of a bed of marl, of bog iron-ore, or of coal. On thrusting the rod perpendicularly into the ground, the sudden want of resistance shows that the cavity or layer of loose earth containing the eggs, has been reached.

. . . The labour of collecting the eggs, and preparing the oil, occupies three weeks.

. . . Our pilot had anchored at the Playa de huevos, to purchase some provisions, our store having begun to run short. We found there fresh meat, Angostura rice, and even biscuit made of wheat-flour. Our Indians filled the boat with little live turtles, and eggs dried in the sun, for their own use. Having taken leave of the missionary of Uruana, who had treated us with great kindness, we set sail about four in the afternoon.

1806: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. William Clark wrote in his journal on this day:

This supply of Elk I think by using economey and in addition of roots and

dogs which we may probably procure from the Natives on Lewis's river will be sufficient to last us to the Chopunnish where we shall meet with our horses, and near which place there is some deer to be procured.

1914: Brazil

From Theodore Roosevelt's *Through the Brazilian Wilderness*:

April 8, we made five kilometres only, as there was a succession of rapids. . . . At four we made camp at the head of another stretch of rapids, over which the Canadian canoes would have danced without shipping a teaspoonful of water, but which our dugouts could only run empty. Cherrie killed three monkeys and Lyra caught two big piranhas, so that we were again all of us well provided with dinner and breakfast. When a number of men, doing hard work, are most of the time on half-rations, they grow to take a lively interest in any reasonably full meal that does arrive.

APRIL 7

FOOD FIRSTS

1852: USA

The first known mention of baking powder appeared in an advertisement in the *New York Times*.

Durkee's Baking Powder. Housewives are advised to try the above article and they will find a cessation of complaints from husbands and other about sour or heavy bread, biscuits, pastry, &c, and on the contrary, will hear accompanied by smiles "What nice biscuits you have made, my dear," &c &c. Grocers and other can be supplied by calling at or sending orders through Penny Post to the principal depot, No. 139 Water St.

1887: USA

There was an early mention of granita in an article in the *New York Tribune* on this day: "Granites . . . must be frozen without much beating, or even much stirring, as the design is to have a rough, icy substance." Many references state

that this is the first mention of granita in America, but in fact Mark Twain is given by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as providing the first written use of the word, in *Innocents Abroad* (1869), with the following: “People at small tables [in Venice], smoking and taking granita (a first cousin to ice-cream).”

Granitas and other frozen treats were in fact well known before Twain’s mention of them in Italy. In *A Manual: Containing Original Recipes for Preparing Ices* (1851) by William Fuller, the author says:

For Liquid Ices of Fruits and Cream

Granite Ices may be made with milk, or the juices of all sorts of fruit; but it is necessary to put less sugar than in other Ices, and also less salt, and not work it too much. This description of ice will do to drink at evening parties, like lemonade, orangeade, or Punch alla Romana, &c., &c.

FOOD & WAR

1779: American Revolutionary War

Provisioning for the army was the subject of orders made at a general assembly of the governor and company of the state of Connecticut, held in Hartford: “An act for ascertaining the quantity of grain, flour and meal in this state and thereof to make provision for an immediate supply of bread for the army, and the necessitous inhabitants of the state; and for securing other necessary articles for the army.”

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1709: America

From the diary of William Byrd of Westover, Virginia:

I reproached my wife for ordering the old beef to be kept and the fresh beef to be used first, contrary to good management, on which she was pleased to be very angry, and this put me out of humor. I ate nothing but boiled beef for dinner. I went away presently after dinner to look after my people. When I returned I read more Italian and then my wife came and begged my pardon and we were friends again.

1802: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde: “Sent my poor Neighbour Will. Richmond to day a Bottle (and the last that I had) of very old strong Beer 10 yrs old, he being dropsically inclined.”

LAST MEAL

1972: New York, USA

“Crazy Joe” Gallo, the Mafia boss, was gunned down at his forty-third birthday party at Umberto’s Clam House, while eating spaghetti with clams.

APRIL 8

FOOD & MEDICINE

1992: USA

The Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine announced a proposal to update the “Basic Four Food Groups” which had been developed by the USDA in 1916. The original basic four were as follows:

1. Meats, poultry, fish, dry beans and peas, eggs, and nuts
2. Dairy products, such as milk, cheese, and yogurt
3. Grains
4. Fruits and vegetables

Meat and dairy lost all status in the newly proposed basic four, which were:

1. The whole grain group
2. The vegetable group

3. The fruit group
4. The legume group

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1873: USA

Alfred Paraf of New York, for the Oleomargarine Manufacturing Company, was granted Patent No. 137,564 for an “Improvement in Purifying and Separating [Animal] Fats.” This represented the first commercially successful margarine manufacturing process.

Paraf explained his idea in the patent application:

The nutritive property of animal fat is most entirely owing to the oleomargarine it contains, the stearine being constantly oxidized by pulmonary respiration. It appeared to me, therefore, of the greatest importance to separate from fresh fat all its nutritive parts, at the same time keeping it odorless, in order to use the same for domestic, cooking, perfumery, and medical purposes, as well as the raw material for the manufacture of useful articles from it.

EMIGRANTS ABOARD

1844: London, England

The *London Illustrated* newspaper gave a list of the weekly on-board allowance for emigrants setting off for Australia:

165 men, women and children emigrants embarked at Deptford on board the *St Vincent*, 628 tons, bound for Plymouth, Cork and Sydney Australia. The weekly allowance, given in proportion daily, to each adult during the voyage is 4½ lb. of Bread, 1lb of beef, 1 lb. of pork, 1 lb. of preserved meat, 1¾ lb. flour, ½ lb. raisins, 6oz suet, 1 pint peas, ½ lb. rice, ½ lb. preserved potatoes, 1 oz. tea, 1½ oz. roast coffee, ¾ lb. sugar, 6 oz. butter, 5 gallons and 1 quart water, 1 gill pickled cabbage, ½ gill vinegar, and 2 oz. salt.

FOOD FIRSTS

1494: Hispaniola (Dominican Republic)

A letter written by [Diego Alvarez Chanca](#), a physician who accompanied Columbus on his second voyage, arrived in Spain on April 8. It contains an early reference to the chili pepper, which he called “agi.”

Their principal food consists of a sort of bread, made of the roots of a vegetable which is between a tree and a vegetable, and the agé, which I have already described as being like the turnip, and very good food; they use, to season it, a spice called agi, which they also eat with fish, and such birds as they can catch of the many kinds which abound in the island, which they prepare in various ways.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt’s journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

[N]oticed several brush trees, common in other parts of the country . . . several Cucurbitaceae, one with oblong fruit about an inch long, another with a round fruit half an inch in diameter, red and white, resembling a gooseberry; a third was of an oblong form, two inches and a half long and one broad; and a fourth was of the size and form of an orange, and of a beautiful scarlet colour: the two last had an excessively bitter taste.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1664: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys. He recorded his Good Friday dinner on this day: “So home to dinner, and had an excellent Good Friday dinner of pease porridge—and apple pie . . . So to the office all the afternoon . . . then home to the only Lenten supper I have had of wiggs and ale.”

Pease porridge: Porridge or pottage (the words have the same origin) made from pulses or grains has been the staple meal of peasants for many centuries. In its simplest form it is a sort of soup with a starchy base, but other ingredients are added depending on availability and circumstances (see **February 1**).

1750: England

Mademoiselle du Bocage described her breakfast at the home of Lady Elizabeth Montagu in England in her *Letters on England, Holland, and Italy*:

In the morning, breakfasts, which enchant as much by the exquisite viands as by the richness of the plate on which they are served up, agreeably bring together the people of the country and strangers. We breakfasted in this manner to-day, April 8, 1750, at Lady Montagu's in a closet lined with painted paper of Pekin, and furnished with the choicest movables of China. A long table, covered with the finest linen, presented to the view a thousand glittering cups, which contained coffee, chocolate, biscuits, cream, butter, toasts, and exquisite tea. You must understand that there is no good tea to be had anywhere but in London. The mistress of the house, who deserves to be served at the table of the gods, poured it out herself. This is the custom, and, in order to conform to it, the dress of the English ladies, which suits exactly to their stature, the white apron and the pretty straw-hat become them with the greatest propriety, not only in their own apartments, but at noon, in St. James's Park, where they walk with the stately and majestic gait of nymphs.

1796: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde. He entertained guests for dinner and described the typical two-course dinner of the time:

Mr. Custance was with us by half past two. He brought us a brace of Cucumbers, very fine ones, and the first we have seen this Year. . . . We had for Dinner, a fine Cod's Head and Shoulders, boiled, and Oyster Sauce, Peas-Soup, Ham and 2. boiled Chicken, and a fine Saddle of Mutton roted, Potatoes, Colli-Flower-Brocoli and Cucumber. 2nd Course, a rost Duck, Maccaroni, a sweet batter Pudding and Currant Jelly, Blamange, and Rasberry Puffs. Desert, Oranges, Almonds & Raisins, Nutts, & dried Apples. Beefans. Port and Sherrv Wines. Porter. strong Beer & small.

1836: USA

From missionary Narcissa Whitman's journal of her journey in 1836 from New York, across the Rocky Mountains, to Oregon and beyond:

Snake river. We have an excellent camp ground to-night; plenty of feed for our horses and cattle. . . . The hunters came in last night well loaded; they had been in the mountains two days after game and killed three elk and two antelope. This is the first elk meat we have had, and it is the last opportunity we expect to have of taking any more game. We are told that many have traveled the whole distance from Rendezvous to Walla Walla without any fresh meat. We think our will last until we reach the salmon fishing at Snake Falls. Thus we are well provided for contrary to our expectations. Mr. McLeod has excellent hunters; this is the reason why we live so well. There is but little game and that is found at a great distance from the route.

APRIL 9

KING GEORGE IV's BREAKFAST

1830: London, England

King George IV was considered lazy and gluttonous by many of his contemporaries, and it seems that he paid for his indulgent lifestyle with poor health in the last years of his reign. His appetite did not seem to be affected, however, as the following letter suggests. The letter was written less than six weeks from his death (on June 26) by the Duke of Wellington to his friend, Mrs. Harriet Arbuthnot:

I heard of the King this morning, What do you think of his breakfast yesterday morning for an Invalid? A Pidgeon and Beef Steak Pye of which he eat two Pigeons and three Beefsteaks. Three parts of a Bottle of Mozelle, a Glass of Dry Champagne, two glasses of Port & a Glass of Brandy! . . . he had taken laudanum the night before, and again before this breakfast, again last night and again this morning!

Three days before his death, according to a note in Mrs. Arbuthnot's journal, his appetite was still excellent:

His mode of living is really beyond belief. One day last week, at the hour of the servant's dinner, he called the Page in and said, "Now you are going to dinner. Go downstairs, cut from the part you like the best yourself, and bring me it up." The Page accordingly went and fetched him an enormous quantity of roast beef, all of which he ate, & then slept for five hours.

One night he drank two glasses of hot ale and toast, three glasses of claret, some strawberries!! and glass of brandy. No wonder he is likely to die. But they say he will have all these things & nobody can prevent him. I dare say the wine would not hurt him, for with the Evil (which all the Royal Family have) it is necessary, I believe, to have a great deal of high food, but the mixture of ale and strawberries is enough to kill a horse.

FOOD & WAR

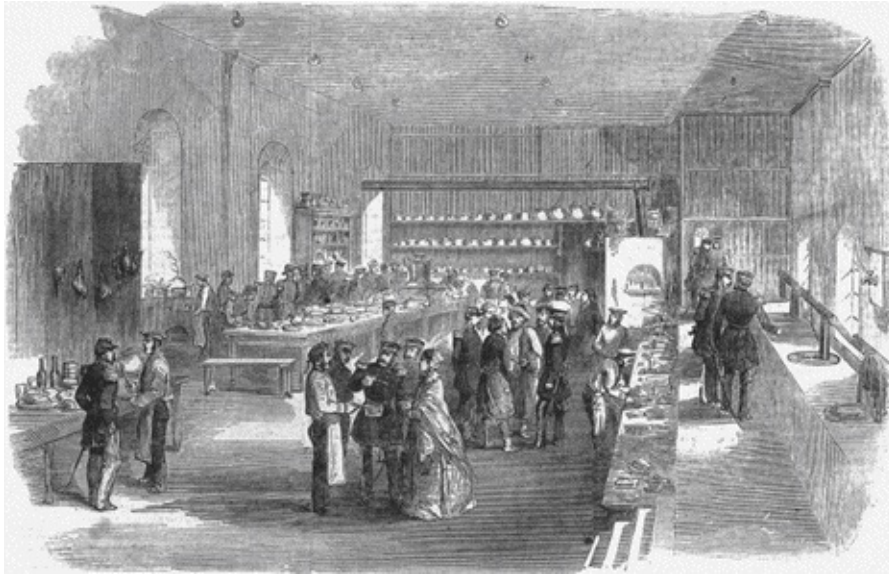
1855: Scutari, Turkey, Crimean War

The high-profile chef Alexis Soyer opened his newly designed kitchen in the Barrack Hospital of Scutari on this day (Easter Monday). Brigadier-General Lord William Paulet and a number of other officials and dignitaries were present, including "a select company of ladies and gentlemen" who tested the dishes and condiments prepared by Soyer for the new hospital diet.

The *London Illustrated News* ran an article later in the year, in which they quoted Soyer himself:

On my arrival here I first visited, in company with Miss Nightingale and one of the principle medical officers of this hospital, all the store-rooms, cook-houses, small kitchens and provision departments, to learn the rules, regulations, and allowances made by the authorities. Having been initiated upon these points, at a trifling expense I at once organised one of the Turkish kitchens, belonging to the Hospital Barracks. Instead of their being no appropriate kitchen, as was represented to me by several Government employees prior to my embarkation for the East, I found no room for culinary purposes, even upon the most extensive scale. I then prepared my bill of fare, according to the provisions allowed, which at all times are of an

inferior quality.



M. Soyer's kitchen at Scutari Barracks

(Wellcome Library, London)

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1889: USA

Patent No. 400,983 was granted to Horace Williams, John L. Alberger, and Louis R. Alberger of Buffalo, New York, for an "Apparatus for the Manufacture of Salt." This was further described as a "process of making salt from brine and the apparatus used, it being especially adapted to the manufacture of fine salt and to the saving of fuel usually employed."

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769: At Sea

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks. He explains "how to cure cabbage

for use at sea.”

“*South Sea*” Fine weather and pleasant breeze. It is now almost night and time for me to wind up the clue of my this days lucubrations, so as we have found no Island I shall employ the time and paper which I had allotted to describe one in a work which I am sure will be more usefull at, if not more entertaining to all future navigators, by describing the method which we took to cure Cabbage in England; which Cabbage we have eat every day since we left Cape Horne and have now good store of, remaining as good at least to our palates and full as green and pleasing to the eye as if it was bought fresh every morning at Covent Garden market. Our Steward has given me the receipt which I shall copy exactly false spelling exceptd.

Take a strong Iron bound cask for no weak or wooden bound one should ever be trusted in a long voyage, take out the head and when the whole is well cleand cover the bottom with salt. Then take the Cabbage and stripping off the outside leaves take the rest leaf by leaf till you come to the heart which cut into four; these leaves and heart lay upon the Salt about 2 or 3 inches thick and sprinkle Salt pretty thick over them and lay cabbage upon the salt stratum super thick till the cask is full. Then lay on the head of the cask with a weight which in 5 or 6 days will have pressd the cabbage into a much smaller compass. After this fill up the cask with more cabbage as before directed and Head it up. N.B. the Cabbage should be gatherd in dry weather some time after sun rise that the dew may not be upon it. Halves of cabbages are better for keeping than single leaves.

1805: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. Meriwether Lewis made mention of the Jerusalem artichoke (*Helianthus tuberosus*), a native of the North American continent, in his journal on this day:

When we halted for dinner [Sacagawea] busied herself in serching for the wild artichokes . . . this operation she performed by penetrating the earth with a sharp stick about some small collections of drift wood. her labour soon proved successful, and she procurrd a good quantity of these roots.

1832: Brazil

From Charles Darwin's journal of the voyage of the *Beagle*. He travelled across the country on this day to visit the estate of an English acquaintance.

We left our miserable sleeping-place before sunrise. . . . We dined at Mandetiba; the thermometer in the shade being 84 degs. The beautiful view of the distant wooded hills, reflected in the perfectly calm water of an extensive lagoon, quite refreshed us. As the venda here was a very good one, and I have the pleasant, but rare remembrance, of an excellent dinner, I will be grateful and presently describe it, as the type of its class. . . . The hosts are most ungracious and disagreeable in their manners; their houses and their persons are often filthily dirty; the want of the accommodation of forks, knives, and spoons is common; and I am sure no cottage or hovel in England could be found in a state so utterly destitute of every comfort. At Campos Novos, however, we fared sumptuously; having rice and fowls, biscuit, wine, and spirits, for dinner; coffee in the evening, and fish with coffee for breakfast. All this, with good food for the horses, only cost 2s. 6d. per head.

1852: Australia

From the diary of Edward Snell in the goldfields of Bendigo, Victoria:

[B]y Jove while I've been sketching, I've forgotten the damper and its burnt black as coal, there it is on the right hand side of the sketch—wouldn't I have blown up Wornum if he had done it—as there is no one but myself to kick up a row with and as I'm tired of sketching I'll just light a fresh pipe and meditate about it.

Damper: See September 8.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1773: England

From the journal of James Boswell, the biographer of Samuel Johnson:

To my great surprize he asked me to dine with him on Easter-day. I never supposed that he had a dinner at his house; for I had not then heard of any one of his friends having been entertained at his table. He told me, "I

generally have a meat pye on Sunday: it is baked at a publick oven, which is very properly allowed, because one man can attend it; and thus the advantage is obtained of not keeping servants from church to dress dinners.’”

It was still quite common in the eighteenth century for individuals to take items such as bread or large pies or cakes to the local baker, who, for a fee, would bake them in the residual heat of the brick oven.

1857: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau, while he was in Cape Cod:

Thursday. A. M.—To the cove south of the town. See them haul two seines. They caught chiefly alewives, from sixty to a hundred at a haul, seine twelve to fifteen feet wide. There were also caught with the alewives, skates, two or three “drums” (like flatfish, only the mouth twisted the other way and not good), flatfish, smelts, sculpins, five-fingers, and a lobster with red claws. This was what the seine would catch in making a large circuit. It seemed to be pretty hard work hauling it in, employing two or three men or boys at each end. A fisherman said that they caught the first alewife the 28th of March there.

APRIL 10

FIRST BANANAS

1633: London, England

Bananas went on public display for the first time in England, in the shop window of Thomas Johnson. Johnson had obtained a live banana plant, complete with a hand of fruit, from the Bahamas. The fruit had ripened by three weeks later, and it remained on display until it rotted, in June.

Johnson’s notes say:

April 10. 1633. my much honored friend Argent (now President of the Colledge of Physitions of London) gaue me a plant he receiued from the

Bermuda's: the length of the stalke was some two foot; the thicknesse thereof some seuen inches about, being crested, and full of a soft pith, so that one might easily with a knife cut it asunder. It was crooked a little, or indented, so that each two or three inches space it put forth a knot of some halfe inch thicknesse, and some inch in length, which incompassed it morre than halfe about; and vpon each of these ioints or knots, in two rankes one about another, grew the fruit, some twenty, nieteene, eitheene, &c. mor or lesse, at each knot: for the branch I had, contained nine knots or diuisions, and vpon the lowest knot grew twenty [fruits], and vpon the vppermost fifteene. The fruit which I receiued was not ripe, but greene, each of them was about the bignesse of a large Beane; the length of them some fiue inches, and the bredth some inch and halfe . . . This stalke with the fruit thereon I hanged vp in my shop, were it became ripe about the beginning of May, and lasted vntil Iune: the pulp or meat was very soft and tender, and it did eate somewhat like a Muske-Melon . . . This Plant is found in many places of Asia, Africke, and America, especially in the hot regions: you may find frequent mention of it amongst the sea voyages to the East and West Indies, by the name of Plantaines, or Platanus, Bannanas, Bonnanas, Bouanas, Dauanas, Poco, &c. Some (As our Author hath said) haue iudged it the forbidden fruit; other-some, the Grapes brought to Moses out of the Holy-land.

THE STARVATION YEARS

1790: Australia

The first few years in the new colony were the “starvation years.” It was announced on this date that the weekly ration would be reduced as of April 12. An amount of two and a half pounds flour, two pounds pork, and two pounds rice was to be issued each day to be divided among seven people “without distinction.” A slightly larger allowance was made to hunters and fishermen in recognition of the extra energy requirement of these occupations.

FOOD BUSINESS

1787: London, England

The famous English tea company Twining's unveiled its famous sign of a

doorway with a heraldic lion and two Chinese figures at the top. It is the world's oldest company logo still in use. Thomas Twining began to sell tea from premises in the Strand, London, in 1706. The tiny building is still occupied by Twining's today, and the doorway is instantly recognizable as the one in the logo.

The brand was already recognized by name as a purveyor of high-quality tea in the late eighteenth century and was known to Jane Austen, who mentioned it in a letter to her sister.

MOTORWAY FOOD

2000: Britain

Egon Ronay, the food critic and author of the series *A Guide to British Eateries*, launched a scathing attack on the quality of the food at Britain's motorway service areas from his (now defunct) website on this day. Ronay noted that 90 percent of the roadside franchises were owned by three companies (Welcome Break, Granada, and Road Chef) and opined that the standard of food had reached an all-time low. As examples of "the unspeakable rubbish" served up at these rest stops, he cited coffee that smelt of washing-up water, tough bacon, disgusting fried eggs, limp chips, a mess of goulash, inedible chicken, and chocolate mousse that was "a joke." To add insult to injury, the prices charged for these foods and beverages were usually greater than equivalent items in the high street.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769: At Sea

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks. Banks described the common practice of towing the next day's piece of salted meat behind the ship. It says much about the hardness and saltiness of the usual ship's rations that immersion in seawater for a number of hours actually improved it: "As soon as I came down a shark at the stern attacked the net in which tomorrow's dinner was towing to freshen, we hooked and took him just as it became dark."

1841: Australia

From the journal of Edward John Eyre (1815–1901) on an expedition into the inland of central Australia:

Four days' provisions having been given to each of the party, I took the King George's Sound native of the other native boys, leading a horse to carry a little water for us, and take back the stores the overseer had buried at that point, when the second horse knocked up with him on the morning of the 9th. Having found the things, and put them on the horse, I sent the boy with them back to the camp, together with a large sting-ray fish which he had speared in the surf near the shore. It was a large, coarse, ugly-looking thing, but as it seemed to be of the same family as the skate, I did not imagine we should run any risk in eating it. In other respects, circumstances had broken through many scruples and prejudices, and we were by no means particular as to what the fish might be, if it were eatable.

Having buried our little keg of water until our return, the King George's Sound native and myself pushed on for five miles further, and then halted for the night, after a day's journey of fifteen miles. We now cooked some sting-ray fish (for the native with me had speared a second one), and though it was coarse and dry, our appetites had been sharpened by our walk, and we thought it far from being unpalatable.

1861: Australia

From the notes and journals of members of the Burke and Wills expedition of 1860–1861 to cross Australia from south to north. Burke and his party had been forced to kill Burke's faithful horse Billy. William John Wills wrote on this day:

Remained at Camp 52 R all day, to cut up and jerk the meat of the horse Billy, who was so reduced and knocked up for want of food that there appeared little chance of his reaching the other side of the desert; and as we were running short of food of every description ourselves; we thought it best to secure his flesh at once. We found it healthy and tender, but without the slightest trace of fat in any portion of the body.

1914: Brazil

From Theodore Roosevelt's narrative of his expedition *Through the Brazilian*

Wilderness: “In the afternoon we got an elderly toucan, a piranha, and a reasonably edible side-necked river-turtle; so we had fresh meat again.”

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1843: USA

From the journal of Nathaniel Hawthorne. His wife was in Boston visiting her sister, and he was dining alone.

At dinner, behold an immense joint of roast veal! I would willingly have had some assistance in the discussion of this great piece of calf. I am ashamed to eat alone; it becomes the mere gratification of animal appetite, —the tribute which we are compelled to pay to our grosser nature; whereas, in the company of another it is refined and moralized and spiritualized; and over our earthly victuals (or rather vittles, for the former is a very foolish mode of spelling),—over our earthly vittles is diffused a sauce of lofty and gentle thoughts, and tough meat is mollified with tender feelings. But oh! these solitary meals are the dismallest part of my present experience.”

1842: USA

Charles Dickens was visiting the United States and on this day was in St. Louis:

We went to a large hotel, called the Planter’s House: built like an English hospital, with long passages and bare walls, and sky-lights above the room-doors for the free circulation of air. There were a great many boarders in it; and as many lights sparkled and glistened from the windows down into the street below, when we drove up, as if it had been illuminated on some occasion of rejoicing. It is an excellent house, and the proprietors have most bountiful notions of providing the creature comforts. Dining alone with my wife in our own room, one day, I counted fourteen dishes on the table at once.

APRIL 11

THE CHARACTER OF A COFFEE HOUSE

1673: England

In the seventeenth century, broadsheets were a popular way of making satirical political or social commentary as well as a mechanism for public announcements and product promotions. The following extract from a thirteen-page broadsheet is a witty commentary on the role of the coffee-house in seventeenth century life.

THE CHARACTER OF A Coffee-House, WITH THE SYMPTOMES OF A TOWN-WIT.

With Allowance, April 11th. 1673.

LONDON, Printed for Jonathan Edwin, at the three Roses in Lud-Gate-Street, 1673.

THE CHARACTER OF A Coffee-House, &c.

A Coffee-House is a Lay-Conventicle, Good-fellowship turn'd Puritan, Ill-husbandry in Masquerade, whither people come, after Topping all day, to purchase, at the expence of their last peny, the repute of sober Companions; a Rota-Room that (like Noahs Ark) receives Animals of every sort, from the precise diminutive Band, to the Hectoring Cravat and Cuffs in Folio; a Nursery for training up the smaller Fry of Virtuosi in confident Tattling, or a Cabal of Kittling Criticks that have only learn't to Spit and Mew; a Mint of Intelligence, that to make each man his peny-worth, draws out into petty parcels, what the Merchant receives in Builion: He that comes often saves two pence a week in Gazets, and has his News and his Coffee for the same charge, as at a three peny Ordinary they give in Broth to your Chop of Mutton; 'tis an Exchange where Haberdashers of Political small wares meet, and mutually abuse each other, and the Publique, with bottomless stories, and headless notions; the Rendezvous of idle Pamphlets, and persons more idly imployd to read them; a High Court of Justice, where every little Fellow in a Chamlet-Cloak takes upon him to transpose Affairs both in Church and State, to shew reasons against Acts of Parliament, and condemn the Decrees of General Councils;

. . . The room stinks of tobacco worse than hell of brimstone, and is as full of smoke as their heads that frequent it, whose humours are as various as those of Bedlam, and their discourse oftentimes as heathenish and dull as

their liquor; that liquor, which, by its looks and taste, you may reasonably guess to be Pluto's diet drink, that witches tipple out of dead men's skulls, when they ratify to Belzebub their sacramental vows. . . . As you have a hodge-podge of drinks, such too is your company, for each man seems a leveller, and ranks and files himself as he lists, with. out regard to degrees or order; so that often you may see a silly fop and a worshipful justice, a griping rook and a grave citizen, a worthy lawyer and an errant pickpocket, a reverend nonconformist and a canting mountebank, all blended together to compose an oglio of impertinence.

. . . For a parting blow then give us leave to unbend a little, and say,

A coffee-house is a phanatick theatre, a hot house to flux in for a clapped understanding, a sympaihetical cure for the gonorrhoea of the tongue, or a refined bauty-house, where illegitimate reports are got in close adultery, between lying lips and itching ears.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769: At Sea

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks:

Up at 5 this morn to examine the shark who proves to be A blew Shark *Squalus glaucus* . . . The seamen tell us that the blew shark is worst of all sharks to eat, indeed his smell is abominably strong so as we had two of the better sort he was hove overboard.

. . . As I am now on the brink of going ashore after a long passage thank god in as good health as man can be I shall fill a little paper in describing the means which I have taken to prevent the scurvy in particular.

The ship was supplyd by the Admiralty with Sower crout which I eat of constantly till our salted Cabbage was open which I preferd as a pleasant substitute. Wort was servd out almost constantly, of this I drank from a pint or more every evening but all this did not so intirely check the distemper as to prevent my feeling some small effects of it. About a fortnight ago my gums swelld and some small pimples rose in the inside of my mouth which threatned to become ulcers, I then flew to the lemon Juice which had been

put up for me according to Dr Hulmes method describd in his book and in his letter which is inserted here: every kind of liquor which I usd was made sour with the Lemon juice No 3 so that I took near 6 ounces a day of it.

Wort is an infusion or decoction of malt which was believed to have medicinal value in a number of conditions, including scurvy.

1805: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. Wiliam Clark wrote on this day: “Set out verry early. I walked on Shore, Saw fresh bear tracks. One deer & 2 beaver killed this morning. In the after part of the day kiled two gees.”

U.S. STATE FOOD

2003: Louisiana, USA

The state legislature determined that “[t]here shall be an official state meat pie. The official state meat pie shall be the Natchitoches Meat Pie. Its use on official documents of the state and with the insignia of the state is hereby authorized.”

The pie is an individual-sized, crescent-shaped turnover made with wheat pastry, filled with spiced and seasoned ground beef, pork, onions, and garlic.

FOOD BUSINESS

1986: USA

The Kellogg Company of Battle Creek ceased allowing tours of the breakfast food plant, stating the risk of industrial espionage from its competitors as the reason.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1773: England

From the journal of James Boswell, the biographer of Samuel Johnson:

April 11, being Easter-Sunday, after having attended Divine Service at St. Paul's, I repaired to Dr. Johnson's. I had gratified my curiosity much in dining with Jean Jaques Rousseau, while he lived in the wilds of Neufchatel: I had as great a curiosity to dine with Dr. Samuel Johnson, in the dusky recess of a court in Fleet-street. I supposed we should scarcely have knives and forks, and only some strange, uncouth, ill-drest dish: but I found every thing in very good order. We had no other company but Mrs. Williams and a young woman whom I did not know. As a dinner here was considered as a singular phaenomenon, and as I was frequently interrogated on the subject, my readers may perhaps be desirous to know our bill of fare. Foote, I remember, in allusion to Francis, the Negro, was willing to suppose that our repast was Black Broth. But the fact was, that we had a very good soup, a boiled leg of lamb and spinach, a veal pye, and a rice pudding.

Black broth: This is a reference to the famous dish of the Spartans of ancient Greece, which was said to be made from pig's blood mixed with vinegar, and which supposedly accounted for their renowned fearlessness in battle. A "certain native of Sybaris" who tasted this soup is quoted as saying: "Now I do perceive why it is that Spartan soldiers encounter death so joyfully; dead men require no longer to eat; black broth is no longer a necessity."

1794: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde: "One of my Greyhounds, young Fly, got to Betty Cary's this morning and ran away with a Shoulder of Mutton undressed & eat it all up. They made a great lamentation & work about it. I had the Greyhound hanged in the Evening."

FOOD & WAR

1941: England, World War II

From the wartime diary of housewife Nella Last:

Good Friday. . . . I rested and read until lunch. It was easily prepared, for I made the vegetable soup yesterday, and opened a wee tin of pilchards, heated them and served them on hot toast. They were only 5 ½ d., and yet

were a better meal than two cod cutlets costing at least 2s. I feel it would be better value if, instead of bulky, flabby cod and other white fish from America, the Government brought in only dried and tinned fish. So much can be made up from a 1s. tin of salmon or tuna, and so little from the same value of white wet fish. Besides there's the "keeping" value too.

I packed up tea, greengage jam in a little brown pot, brown bread and butter, a little cheese and a piece of cake each, and we set off after lunch. I have been longing and yet dreading to cut this particular cake for some time now. I made it last June, when butter was more plentiful. It was one of two: and one was for Christmas, and one to be shared between Cliff and my husband for their birthdays on 11 and 13 December. I cut only one, made it do over Christmas and thought I'd cut the other at New Year. With my "squirrel's love" of a little in reserve, I made do and kept putting off until it got to Easter! It's a "perfect cake in perfect condition", as my husband said. I wrapped it in grease-proof paper—four separate wrappings—then tied it and put it in an air-tight tin. I expect it's the last good cake we will ever have—at least for years—and I do so love baking cakes and watching people enjoy them (I myself prefer bread and butter on the whole).

APRIL 12

SPACE FOOD

1961

The first manned space flight took place on this day when the Russian Yuri Gagarin spent 108 minutes in orbit around the Earth. The *Vostock* carried a ten-day supply of food in case of retro-rocket failure, but Gagarin did not actually need food during such a short flight. Scientists, however, wanted him to try eating in a weightless environment. He apparently had meat puree and blackcurrant jam from tubes.

FOOD & THE LAW

1872: France

The French government passed a regulation permitting the commercial sale of

margarine, on the basis of a favorable report prepared by a distinguished chemist, Félix Boudet. The same year, Hippolyte Mège-Mouriès began to sell his new product, oleomargarine, but this was not allowed to be labelled “butter.”

THE SOY BEAN

1855: USA

An early mention of the soy bean in connection with Canada and Texas occurs in a letter to the *Cultivator* on this day. The correspondent said:

I have cultivated it for the last three years, and have disseminated it from Canada to Texas. . . . When eaten a few times they are pleasant enough, but have very little flavour—better when mixed with other beans. Before cooking, they must be soaked at least twenty-four hours. They are inconvenient to use green, being so difficult to hull.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt’s journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

I examined the country thus far on the 12th April, after the camp had been formed; on returning, I took with me a large supply of ripe figs, of which we partook freely, and which caused several of us to suffer severely from indigestion, though we had frequently eaten small quantities of them without inconvenience.

1860: Australia

From the journals of John McDouall Stuart’s fourth expedition into the center of the continent:

The Hugh. . . . We are camped at a good spring, where I have found a very remarkable palm-tree, with light-green fronds ten feet long, having small leaves a quarter of an inch in breadth, and about eight inches in length, and

a quarter of an inch apart, growing from each side, and coming to a sharp point. They spread out like the top of the grass-tree, and the fruit has a large kernel about the size of an egg, with a hard shell; the inside has the taste of a cocoa-nut, but when roasted is like a potato.

A few days later, McDouall wrote: "I forgot to mention that the nut we found on the south side of the range is not fit to eat; it caused both men to vomit violently. I ate one, but it had no bad effect on me."

DINNER FROM THE DIGESTER

1682: London, England

John Evelyn wrote in his diary of a demonstration of an early form of pressure cooker at the Royal Society meeting:

I went this afternoone with severall of the Royal Society to a supper which was all dress'd, both fish and flesh, in Monsieur Papin's Digestors, by which the hardest bones of beefe itself, and mutton, were made as soft as cheese without water or other liquor, and with lesse than 8 ounces of coales, producing an incredible quantity of gravy; and for close of a jelley made of bones of beefe, the best for clearness and good relish, and the most delicious that I have ever seen or tasted. We eat pike and other fish bones, and all without impediment; but nothing exceeded the pigeons, which tasted just as if bak'd in a pie, all these being stewed in their own juice without any addition of water save what swam about in the Digester, as in bal neo; the natural juice of all these provisions acting on the grosser substances, reduc'd the hardest bones to tendernesse; but it is best descanted with more particulars for extracting tinctures, preserving and stewing fruited, and saving fuel, in Dr. Papin's booke, publish'd and dedicated to our society, of which he is a member I sent a glass of jelley to my wife, to the reproach of all that the ladies ever made of the best hartshorn.

Hartshorn was, as its name indicates, the antlers of a deer. It was used for its high collagen content to make gelatin. Making "jelly" was a laborious process, as the hartshorn had to be rasped or shaved into fine pieces, then subject to prolonged boiling to extract the gelatin before flavorings or medicinal ingredients were added. The following recipe is from a cookery book of Evelyn's time.

To make Hartshorn Jelly

Take the Brawn of six Cocks, being steeped in Water, and shifted for 24 hours, then take a quarter of a Pound of Hartshorn, and boil these together two hours, then strain the Broath out into a Pipkin, and let it be cold, then take off the top and bottom. Return your clear Jelly into a clean Pipkin, and season it as your Chrystal Jelly before; only adding thereto a little quantity of Chainny; if it be too strong, add some Rhenish Wine, if too weak a small quantity of Ising-glass: You may put herein Majesty of Pearl, or if you please, Corral; after which set it on the Fire again for a quarter of an hour, more or less, according to the strength or weakness of your Jelly; then clarifie it with whites of Eggs, and run it through your Bags as aforesaid, and preserve it in a Glass or Pipkin for your use; this Jelly is a great Cordial, very Restraining and strengthening to the back. It may be taken cold, or else dissolved, being heat again, and so drank.

—*The Whole Body of Cookery Dissected* (London, 1661), by William Rabisha

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1735: England

John Byrom (1692–1763) was an English poet and hymnist and developer of a form of shorthand. He decided to follow a vegetarian diet—very unusual for his day—and described, in a letter to his wife on this day, a meal he shared with two friends: “We supped . . . upon six roasted potatoes, but indifferent, and I ate two and a half of them and some apple tart and drank a glass or two of sherry.”

1798: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde: “Bottled off my last Mead this Morning, it filled twenty six Quart-Bottles—not so clear as I would wish. We were rather too late this Year in bottling it off. Dinner today, Neck of Pork roasted &c.”

1842: USA

Charles Dickens was on his way to see the Looking Glass Prairie. The group stopped briefly in Belleville on the way.

Belleville was a small collection of wooden houses, huddled together in the very heart of the bush and swamp. . . . There was an hotel in this place, which, like all hotels in America, had its large dining-room for the public table. It was an odd, shambling, low-roofed out-house, half-cowshed and half-kitchen, with a coarse brown canvas table-cloth, and tin sconces stuck against the walls, to hold candles at supper-time. The horseman had gone forward to have coffee and some eatables prepared, and they were by this time nearly ready. He had ordered “wheat-bread and chicken fixings,” in preference to “cornbread and common doings.” The latter kind of rejection includes only pork and bacon. The former comprehends broiled ham, sausages, veal cutlets, steaks, and such other viands of that nature as may be supposed, by a tolerably wide poetical construction, “to fix” a chicken comfortably in the digestive organs of any lady or gentleman.

LAST MEAL

1945: Georgia, USA

President Franklin Delano Roosevelt was at the “Little White House” in Warm Springs, Georgia, and was served breakfast in bed. The menu was fried eggs, bacon, and a slice of toast. He died later in the day from a cerebral hemorrhage.

APRIL 13

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769: Tahiti

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks. They had arrived in Tahiti.

This morn early came to an anchor in Port Royal bay King George the thirds Island. Before the anchor was down we were surrounded by a large number of Canoes who traded very quietly and civilly, for beads cheifly, in exchange for which they gave Cocoa nuts Bread fruit both roasted and raw some small fish and apples. They had one pig with them which they refus'd

to sell for nails upon any account but repeatedly offerd it for a hatchet; . . . We then walkd into the woods followd by the whole train to whom we gave beads and small presents. In this manner we walkd for 4 or 5 miles under groves of Cocoa nut and bread fruit trees loaded with a profusion of fruit and giving the most gratefull shade I have ever experienced, under these were the habitations of the people most of them without walls: in short the scene we saw was the truest picture of an arcadia of which we were going to be kings that the imagination can form.

1769: At Sea

From the *Endeavour* journal of Captain James Cook. He discusses the ruses instituted to persuade the seamen to eat the sauerkraut which had been taken aboard as an antiscorbutic.

The Sour Krout the Men at first would not eat untill I put in pratice a method I never once knew to fail with seamen, and this was to have some of it dress'd every day for the Cabbin Table, and permitted all the Officers without exception to make use of it and left it to the option of the Men either to take as much as they pleased or none at all; but this pratice was not continued above a week before I found it necessary to put every one on board to an Allowance, for such are the Tempers and dispoissions of Seamen in general that whatever you give them out of the Common way, altho it be ever so much for their good yet it will not go down with them and you will hear nothing but murmurings gainest the man that first invented it; but the Moment they see their Superiors set a Value upon it, it becomes the finest stuff in the World and the inventer an honest fellow.

1806: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day Meriwether Lewis wrote:

[T]he dog now constitutes a considerable part of our subsistence and with most of the party has become a favorite food; certain I am that it is a healthy strong diet, and from habit it has become by no means disagreeable to me, I prefer it to lean venison or Elk, and it is very far superior to the horse in any state.

1832: Brazil

From Charles Darwin's journal of the voyage of the *Beagle*:

After three days' travelling we arrived at Socego, the estate of Senhor Manuel Figuiareda, a relation of one of our party . . . The chief produce of this part of the country is coffee. Each tree is supposed to yield annually, on an average, two pounds; but some give as much as eight. Mandioca or cassada is likewise cultivated in great quantity. Every part of this plant is useful; the leaves and stalks are eaten by the horses, and the roots are ground into a pulp, which, when pressed dry and baked, forms the farinha, the principal article of sustenance in the Brazils. It is a curious, though well-known fact, that the juice of this most nutritious plant is highly poisonous . . . The pasturage supports a fine stock of cattle, and the woods are so full of game that a deer had been killed on each of the three previous days. This profusion of food showed itself at dinner, where, if the tables did not groan, the guests surely did; for each person is expected to eat of every dish. One day, having, as I thought, nicely calculated so that nothing should go away untasted, to my utter dismay a roast turkey and a pig appeared in all their substantial reality. During the meals, it was the employment of a man to drive out of the room sundry old hounds, and dozens of little black children, which crawled in together, at every opportunity.

1841: Australia

From the journal of Edward John Eyre (1815–1901) on an expedition into the inland of central Australia:

During my absence, I had requested the overseer to bake some bread, in order that it might be tolerably stale before we used it. To my regret and annoyance, I found that he had baked one third of our whole supply, so that it would be necessary to use more than our stated allowance, or else to let it spoil. It was the more vexing, to think that in this case the provisions had been so improvidently expended, from the fact of our having plenty of the sting-ray fish, and not requiring so much bread.

APRIL 14

LUNCH ABOARD THE *TITANIC*

1912: RMS *Titanic*

The menu for the final dinner aboard the RMS *Titanic*, just before it hit an iceberg and sank, has been recorded and discussed in numerous sources. Here, instead, is the luncheon menu for that fateful day.

LUNCHEON

Consomme Fermier

Cockie Leekie

Fillets of Brill

Egg a L'Argenteuil

Chicken a la Maryland

Corned Beef

Vegetables

Dumplings

FROM THE GRILL

Grilled Mutton Chops

Mashed, Fried & Baked Jacket Potatoes

Custard Pudding

Apple Merinque

Pastry

BUFFET

Salmon Mayonnaise

Potted Shrimps

Norwegian Anchovies

Soused Herrings

Plain & Smoked Sardines

Roast Beef

Round or Spiced Beef

Veal & Ham Pie

Virginia & Cumberland Ham

Bologna Sausage

Brawn

Galantine of Chicken

Corned Ox Tongue

Lettuce

Beetroot

Tomatoes

CHEESE

Cheshire

Stilton

Gorgonzola

Edam

Camembert

Roquefort

St. Ivel

Cheddar

—Iced draught Munich Lager 3d. & 6d. a Tankard.—

1874: Paris, France

The first “Dinner of the Five” was held at the Café Riche. The five were Ivan Turgenev, Alphonse Daudet, Gustave Flaubert, Edmond de Goncourt, and Emile Zola. The dinners continued until Flaubert’s death in 1880.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1896: USA

John Harvey Kellogg of Battle Creek, Michigan, was granted Patent No. 561,192 for “Flaked Cereals and Process of Preparing Same.” The patent application described his aim further:

The object of the improvement is to provide a food product which is in a proper condition to be readily digested without preliminary cooking or heating operation, and which is highly nutritive and of an agreeable taste, thus affording a food product particularly well suited for sick and convalescent persons.

The result, as is well known, is “an alimentary produce . . . in the form of large, attenuate, baked, crisp and slightly brown flakes of practically uniform thickness.” The cornflakes were not sold commercially until 1906.

FOOD & POLITICS

1856: London, England

Karl Marx was invited to a banquet at the Bell Hotel in the Strand in London to

commemorate the fourth anniversary of *The People's Paper*. A newspaper report described the proceedings but gave only a minimal description of the food.

The entertainment was of the choicest description, and reflected the greatest credit on the enterprising proprietor of the Hotel, Mr. Hunter; the choicest viands and condiments of the season being supplied in profusion. . . . The banquet commenced at seven, and at nine o'clock the cloth was cleared, when a series of sentiments was given from the chair. The Chairman then proposed the toast: "The proletarians of Europe", which was responded to by Dr Marx.

1974: New York

A diplomatic dinner was held at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York in honor of Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping. It is said that Kissinger toasted Deng repeatedly, saying "I think if we drink enough mao tai we can solve anything" to which Deng apparently replied "Then when I go back to China, I must increase production of it." Kissinger continued: "You know, when the president came back from China, he wanted to show his daughter how potent mao tai was. So he took out a bottle and poured it into a saucer and lit it, but the glass bowl broke and the mao tai ran over the table and the table began to burn! So you nearly burned down the White House."

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1599: Sicily

Thomas Dallam, a master organist, was en route to visit "The Grand Turk" and made some remarks about Sicily in his journal: "The 14th we sayelled by a famous iland Caled Sissillia, cloce by the shore of it. This ilande, they saye, is threescore leages in lenghte; a verrie frutfull and pleasante island. It doth yelde greate store of corne and all manner of frute."

1769: Tahiti

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks:

King George the thirds Island . . . The cheif then made us signs that if we

chose to eat he had victuals ready: we accepted the offer and dind heartily on fish and bread fruit with plantains *etc.* dressd after their way, raw fish was offerd to us which it seems they themselves eat. The adventures of this entertainment I much wish to record particularly, but am so much hurried by attending the Indians ashore almost all day long that I fear I shall scarce understand my own language when I read it again.

1914: Brazil

From Theodore Roosevelt's narrative of his expedition *Through the Brazilian Wilderness*:

[W]e made a good run of some thirty-two kilometres. . . . Different members of the party caught many fish, and shot a monkey and a couple of jacare-tinga birds kin to a turkey, but the size of a fowl—so we again had a camp of plenty. . . . On this day the men found some new nuts of which they liked the taste; but the nuts proved unwholesome and half of the men were very sick and unable to work the following day.

BRIDE CAKE

1783: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde. He recorded the gift of some wedding cake on this day: "Mrs. Davey sent us some bride-Cake this morning from Hockering."

Bride-cake was, of course, a cake made to celebrate a wedding. There was no specific theme or recipe, but it was expected to be the finest that could be made or procured. The earliest known written recipe for the almond and white icing which we now consider traditional happens to have appeared in the time of Parson Woodforde. It is in Elizabeth Raffald's very successful book, *The Experienced English Housekeeper*, published in 1769.

To make a Bride Cake

Take four Pounds of fine Flour well dried, four Pounds of fresh Butter, two

Pounds of Loaf Sugar, pound and sift fine a quarter of an Ounce of Mace, the same of Nutmegs, to every Pound of Flour put eight Eggs, wash four Pounds of Currants, pick them well and dry them before the Fire, blanch a Pound of Sweet Almonds (and cut them lengthway very thin) a Pound of Citron, one Pound of candied Orange, the same of candied Lemon, half a Pint of Brandy; first work the Butter with your Hand to a Cream, then beat in your Sugar a quarter of an Hour, beat the Whites of your Eggs to a very strong Froth, mix them with your Sugar and Butter, beat your Yolks half an Hour at least, and mix them With your Cake, then put in your Flour, Mace, and Nutmeg, keep beating it well 'till your Oven is ready, put in your Brandy, and beat your Currants and Almonds lightly in, tie three Sheets of Paper round the Bottom of your Hoop to keep it from running out, rub it well with Butter, put in your Cake, and lay your Sweetmeats in three Lays, with Cake betwixt every Lay, after it is risen and coloured, cover it with Paper before your Oven is stopped up; it will take three Hours baking.

To make Almond Icing for the Bride Cake

Beat the whites of three eggs to a strong froth; beat a pound of Jordan almonds very fine with rosewater. Mix your almonds with the eggs lightly together [with] a pound of common loaf sugar beat fine, and put it in by degrees. When your cake is enough, take it out and lay your icing on and put it to brown.

To make Sugar Icing for the Bride Cake

Beat two pounds of double-refined sugar with two ounces of fine starch, sift through a gauze sieve. Then beat the whites of five eggs with a knife upon a pewter dish half an hour. Beat in your sugar a little at a time, or it will make the eggs fall and will not be so good a colour. When you have put in all your sugar beat it half an hour longer, then lay it on your almond icing and spread it even with a knife. If it be put on as soon as the cake comes out of the oven, it will be hard by that time the cake is cold.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1841: Brook Farm, Oak Hill, West Roxbury, Massachusetts, USA

From Nathaniel Hawthorne's American journals:

I did not milk the cows last night, because Mr Ripley was afraid to trust them to my hands, or me to their horns, I know not which. But this morning I have done wonders. Before breakfast, I went out to the barn and began to chop hay for the cattle, and with such “righteous vehemence,” as Mr Ripley says, did I labor, that in the space of ten minutes I broke the machine. Then I brought wood and replenished the fires; and finally went down to breakfast, and ate up a huge mound of buckwheat cakes.

APRIL 15

MAUNDY THURSDAY

1731: England

It was Maundy Thursday (the day before Good Friday) in the Christian church on this day, and the tradition of the monarch washing the feet of the poor (as many poor men as the years of the monarch’s age) was upheld, although from the time of William it was actually the king’s almoner who did the washing. The “maunds”—that is, money, food and clothes—were then distributed. The king was George II, and forty-eight (the king’s age) poor women were supplied with

boiled beef and shoulders of mutton, and small bowls of ale, which is called dinner; after that large wooden platters of fish and loaves, viz. undressed, one large old ling, and one large dried cod; twelve red herrings and twelve white herrings, and four half quarter loaves. Each person had one platter of this provision; after which were distributed to them shoes, stockings, linen and woolen cloth, and leather bags, with one penny, twopenny, threepenny and fourpenny pieces of silver and shilings; to each about four pounds in value.

LUNCHEON IN THE AIR

1941: USA

United Air Lines celebrated the opening of its own commissary at LaGuardia with a luncheon in the air over New York for food editors on this day. Food served on United Airlines planes before this date had been provided by an

outside caterer. The *New York Times* reported some details of the meal:

Institution of the new service was celebrated with a meal that included grapefruit cocktail, stuffed breast of chicken Mainliner, new peas in a basket, endive salad with Lorenzo dressing, and fresh strawberry tartlet or crackers and cheese.

Meals are prepared in a kitchen in the company's hangar. Courses which must be served cold are put in boxes of dry ice, and hot foods are kept warm in electric boxes, into which they are placed sometimes when only partly cooked.

FOOD BUSINESS

1906: USA

Caleb Bradham registered a second Pepsi-Cola trademark with the United States Patent and Trademark Office. The original script was modified with the slogan "The Original Pure Food Drink." The first trademark had been registered on June 16, 1903, as a tonic beverage with the slogan "Exhilarating, Invigorating, Aids Digestion."

FAST FOOD

1955: USA

The first McDonald's was opened by Ray Kroc in Des Plaines, Illinois. Kroc was a catering equipment salesman and visited brothers Dick and Mac McDonald at their successful self-service, drive-through burger restaurant in San Bernardino, California, on a routine sales trip. Kroc was intrigued by their menu and "Speedee Service System," and it appears that franchising was discussed. The McDonald brothers had started their business in 1940, but the company generally recognizes the day that Kroc's premises—complete with golden arches—opened in 1955 as its anniversary.

Opening Day prices were, for a two-patty hamburger, 15 cents, and for french fries, 10 cents.

The 500th McDonald's opened in 1963. and there are now over 34,000 outlets

The steamship *John L. Stephens* opened in 1853, and there are now over 2,000 canals world-wide.

FOOD & WAR

1856: Panama City, Panama, the Watermelon War

Tensions and resentments had already been running high in Panama for decades when a riot, which became known as the Watermelon War, broke out on the morning of April 15, 1856.

Passengers aboard the newly arrived steamer *John L. Stephens* had had to wait until high tide to be ferried ashore, there being no suitable mainland wharf at the time, and many of them filled in the waiting time at the local cantinas. Details of the sequence of events are not certain, but it is believed that the riot started when a drunken American took a 5-cent piece of watermelon from a vendor and refused to pay for it. In the ensuing tussle, a gun was pulled and a bystander was injured. Events quickly escalated, and the police and other authorities became embroiled. The riot was eventually halted by a group of armed railroad men led by Randolph Runnels. The official report said that fifteen Americans and two Panamanians were killed and a further twenty-nine injured.

1945: Germany, World War II

The British liberated the infamous Bergen-Belsen prison camp on this day. Forty thousand people “in the most extreme state of starvation and emaciation” and in conditions of undescrivable filth and disease, with almost no food, along with 13,000 unburied bodies were found in an area no bigger than 1,500 by 350 meters.

In September, at the beginning of the war crimes trials, Major A. L. Berney described the huge quantities of food that were in the vicinity of the camp but not available for prisoners:

On 15th April I was sent by Headquarters 8 Corps to Colonel Taylor of the Occupying Forces of Belsen Camp. On the next day I was asked to find the nearest food store which I did at the north of the Panzer Troop School about three kilometers from the camp. I found the Hauptmann in charge of the store who informed me that he was responsible for sending some food from

his store to the camp—potatoes and turnips. He did not give me any reason as to why it was the only stuff furnished. I obtained a list of food in the store from him, and remember there were 600 tons of potatoes, 120 tons of tinned milk, 30 tons of sugar, upwards of 20 tons of powdered milk; cocoa, grain, wheat and other foodstuffs. . . . There is a very large bakery there with a capacity, I was told, of 60,000 loaves a day, which was fully staffed. It appeared to me that there was a very vast quantity of all the necessary materials for making bread. The bakery is still working now (*20th September 1945*) and most of the staff.

FOOD PRESERVATION

1848: USA

The *Scientific American* carried an article on preserved potatoes—a highly popular and important topic at the time.

Preserved Potatoes

An importation of considerable novelty and interest has recently taken place by a vessel arrived from Gottenburg, consisting of some casks of potatoes, in a state of preservation. It is known that this description of vegetable is free from duty when imported into this country in a raw state, the privilege extending to all foreign countries, and for a definite period, without reference to the mode of introduction, and the existing navigation laws, and this parcel was entered as being free of duty. On examination, however, by the officers of the revenue, the contents were found to have undergone a process of preserving by which they were considered to be come liable to an *ad valorem* duty of ten per cent, as manufactured goods, the process which they had undergone being the division of the potatoes into small pieces and drying them. We believe that this is a perfect novelty with respect to the importation of the vegetable from foreign countries.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1670: France

The Marquise de Sévigné, in one of her many letters to her daughter, commented once more on the use of chocolate—a very fashionable new beverage at the

once more on the use of chocolate—a very fashionable new beverage at the time:

Chocolate for me is not what it was. All those who spoke well of it now revile it. One curses it; one accuses it of being the cause of all one's ills. It occasions dizziness and palpitations; it suits you for a while, and then it suddenly lights a running fever within you which leads to death.

1735: England

From a letter from John Byrom to his wife in Manchester; he was persevering with his vegetarian diet.

Dr Vernon came by and asked me to dinner, so I went with him and ate the sprouts that he had to his veal and bacon, and tart and cheese, and drank a glass or two of his beer (which I fancied I had better have let alone) . . . Thou wonderest how I keep to my vegetable diet, but I am obliged to do it, or I should suffer; . . . I have just had some milk porridge to supper and am going to bed.

1778: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde. His pigs became drunk on the residue of some beer.

Brewed a vessell of strong Beer today. My two large Piggs, by drinking some Beer grounds taking out of one of my Barrels today, got so amazingly drunk by it, that they were not able to stand and appeared like dead things almost, and so remained all night from dinner time today. I never saw Piggs so drunk in my life. I slit their ears for them without feeling.

They were somewhat recovered the next day (*see* April 16).

1778: London, England

James Boswell wrote of a dinner with Samuel Johnson on this day, at which cookery and cookbooks were discussed:

On Wednesday, April 15, I dined with Dr Johnson at Mr Dilly's. . . . The

subject of cookery having been very naturally introduced at a table where Johnson, who boasted of the niceness of his palate, owned that “he always found a good dinner,” he said, “I could write a better book of cookery than has ever yet been written; it should be a book upon philosophical principles. Pharmacy is now made much more simple. Cookery may be made so too. A prescription which is now compounded of five ingredients, had formerly fifty in it. So in cookery, if the nature of the ingredients be well known, much fewer will do. Then as you cannot make bad meat good, I would tell what is the best butcher’s meat, the best beef, the best pieces; how to choose young fowls; the proper seasons of different vegetables; and then how to roast and boil, and compound.” DILLY. “Mrs. Glasse’s Cookery, which is the best, was written by Dr. Hill. Half the TRADE know this.” JOHNSON. “Well, Sir. This shews how much better the subject of cookery may be treated by a philosopher. I doubt if the book be written by Dr. Hill; for, in Mrs. Glasse’s Cookery, which I have looked into, salt-petre and sal-prunella are spoken of as different substances whereas sal-prunella is only salt-petre burnt on charcoal; and Hill could not be ignorant of this. However, as the greatest part of such a book is made by transcription, this mistake may have been carelessly adopted. But you shall see what a Book of Cookery I shall make! I shall agree with Mr. Dilly for the copy-right.” Miss SEWARD. “That would be Hercules with the distaff indeed.” JOHNSON. “No, Madam. Women can spin very well; but they cannot make a good book of Cookery.”

Dr Johnson himself admitted to enjoying his food, as long as it was good plain fare. At supper on August 5, at supper at an inn in Colchester, he famously remarked: “Some people have a foolish way of not minding, or of pretending not to mind, what they eat. For my part, I mind my belly very studiously and very carefully; for I look upon it that he who does not mind his belly will hardly mind anything else.”

1902: Alaska Territory

Lynn Smith wrote home from the Klondike: “Try that some time some of you. Drink cold Tomatoes and eat dog fish. (I swear I will) never never travel 62 miles in one day over slush Ice and eat dog fish. So help me.”

APRIL 16

A CURIOUS PEANUT MENU

1882: USA

The *Hints for the Household* column in the *New York Times* edition of April 16, 1882, focused on the peanut. The article began with a general discussion of the peanut, the writer noting that “twenty or thirty years ago our peanuts came chiefly from Africa” and that “the bulk of the African product goes to France, whence the oil is exported as ‘pure olive.’” He also commented on the enormous economic value of the domestic crop (specifically from Virginia)—nothing being wasted, as the residual “cake” from the oil pressing was a valuable animal feed, and even the shells were used for horse bedding. Naturally he also felt that the local peanut was superior to the African.

The “curious pea-nut menu” included in the article was not from an actual meal; it was simply a device for demonstrating the remarkable culinary versatility of the peanut. The article included recipes for every dish on the menu, and these were provided by the well-known cookbook writer of the time, Juliet Corson.

A Curious Pea-Nut Menu

Pea-nut Soup.

Pea-nut Soup with Oysters.

Breaded Chops, with pea-nut croquettes.

Pea-nut salad.

Pea-nut souffle.

Pea-nut patties. Pea-nut cakes.

San Domingo ground-nut cakes.

Pea-nut candy. Roasted peanuts.

Pea-nut coffee.

Peanut Coffee

The nuts must be shelled, the brown skins removed, and the kernels roasted the second time very dark brown; then, by crushing or coarsely grinding them, they can be boiled with water, affording a pleasant beverage when used with hot milk and sugar. The quantity of nuts required to make coffee of the desired strength must be decided by individual taste, but a first experiment might be made with a cupful of nuts to a quart of water.

FOOD & WAR

1746: Scotland, Battle of Culloden

Prince Charles Edward Stewart, popularly known as Bonnie Prince Charlie, refused the breakfast of roast lamb and chicken prepared for him on the morning of the battle, saying, “Eat! I can neither eat nor rest while my poor people are starving!”

The Duke of Cumberland, whose birthday had been the day before, had treated his men to a feast of brandy and cheese. Charlie’s men were outnumbered, ill prepared, and starving. In fact, most had dispersed in search of food and were not even ready to fight. The battle was a disaster.

1838: Mexico, the Pastry War

The brief conflict between Mexico and France in 1838–1839 came to be called the Pastry War because the trigger was the claim by a French pastry cook that Mexican army officers had damaged his establishment. The pastry cook made a formal protest and requested reparations. One protest and claim led to other protests and claims, and soon an international incident was brewing. The dictator Santa Ana lost a leg in the conflict, and it was subsequently buried with full military honors.

The French fleet arrived in Veracruz on April 16, 1838, and were quickly in control of the city. A peaceful settlement suddenly seemed sensible. Britain entered the negotiations, and the French fleet withdrew in March 1839.

THE PIE FLOATER

2003: Australia

The National Trust named South Australia's famous pie floater a heritage icon. The specialty consists of a meat pie "floating" in a puddle of "mushy peas," which are essentially the same as thick pea soup, the whole liberally doused with tomato sauce. Both pies and mushy dried peas have been common food for the masses for centuries, but we will never know who put them together in the particular form associated with South Australia.

The dish has been the stimulus for some seriously funny quotations. To the novelist Terry Pratchett, a hero is "someone who will eat a Meat Pie Floater when he is sober." The Scottish comedian Billy Connolly says of it: "You can tell a lot about a nation by its food. Here in Adelaide I discovered a real southern Australian speciality—the pie floater. We're talking proper food here—man's food, none of your Continental rubbish."

IN THE NEWS

1791: USA

The *New York Journal* reported on a huge fish catch:

We hear that a draught of shad was taken near the Narrows on Thursday last, which consisted of fourteen thousand fish, to secure which the fishermen were obliged to add several seines, one upon the other. It is said that this single draught of shad is worth upwards of £200.

FOOD & THE LAW

1850: USA

The first pure food law in California was signed by the governor. It was a single sentence:

If any person or persons shall knowingly sell any flesh of any diseased animal or otherwise unwholesome provisions, or any adulterated provisions or drink or liquors, every person offending shall be fined not more than five hundred dollars, or imprisoned in the county jail not more than six months.

By way of comparison, the FDA's 1997 Food Code is approximately 450 pages.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1841: Australia

From the journal of Edward John Eyre (1815–1901) on an expedition into the inland of central Australia:

Early on the morning of the 16th, I sent the overseer to kill the unfortunate horse, which was still alive, but unable to rise from the ground, having never moved from the place where he had first been found lying yesterday morning. The miserable animal was in the most wretched state possible, thin and emaciated by dreadful and long continued sufferings, and labouring under some complaint, that in a very few hours at the farthest, must have terminated its life.

After a great portion of the meat had been cut off from the carcass, in thin slices, they were dipped in salt water and hung up upon strings to dry in the sun. I could not bring myself to eat any to-day, so horrible and revolting did it appear to me, but the overseer made a hearty dinner, and the native boys gorged themselves to excess, remaining the whole afternoon by the carcass, where they made a fire, cutting off and roasting such portions as had been left. They looked like ravenous wolves about their prey, and when they returned to the camp at night, they were loaded with as much cooked meat as they could carry, and which they were continually eating during the night; I made a meal upon some of the sting-ray that was still left, but it made me dreadfully sick, and I was obliged to lie down, seriously ill.

CHOCOLATE

1660: England

This is the generally accepted birthdate of Sir Hans Sloane (d. 1753), physician to Queen Anne, whose huge personal collection of plants, birds eggs, and other natural history items became the nucleus of the British Museum. Sloane had encountered chocolate while living briefly in Jamaica as physician to the governor in 1687. At that time it was mixed with water, but Sloane, although recognizing its medicinal uses, found the beverage unpleasant to drink. He is credited with the idea of mixing it with milk to make it more palatable to

children and invalids. His preparation was sold by several retailers in London on the basis that it was “Greatly recommended by several eminent Physicians” for its “Lightness on the Stomach, & its great Use in all Consumptive Cases.”

Eventually the Cadbury brothers obtained the rights to “Sir Hans Sloane’s Milk Chocolate prepared after the original recipe.” The instructions on the packaging were simple: “Put one ounce of chocolate to a pint of boiling milk, add sugar.”

“Chocolate” at this time was comprised of ground cacao beans pressed into a hard cake. It was not until the nineteenth century that it was made in the form of sweetened bars for eating.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1778: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde. He remarked in his diary entry for this day on the slow return to sobriety of his drunken pigs (*see* April 15): “My 2 Piggis are still unable to walk yet, but they are better than they were yesterday. They tumble about the yard and can by no means stand at all steady yet. In the afternoon my 2 Piggis were tolerably sober.”

APRIL 17

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1810: USA

Lewis Mills Norton of Goshen, Litchfield County, Connecticut, was granted Patent No. 1,273X for a “Cheese vat for forming pineapple cheese.” On June 27, 1827, he was granted Patent No. 4,779X for a “Mode of applying nets to pineapple cheese.”

Mills’s innovative idea was to cure the firm cheddar-style cheese in string bags, which created distinctive diamond-shaped markings on its surface suggestive of the pineapple, hence the name. In 1847 he built a factory and began producing his distinctive cheese on a large scale.

The highly decorative nature of the cheese meant that it became very popular in the mid-Victorian era when anything and everything was ornamented within an inch of its life. There was even a special bell-shaped dish with a cover in which the cheese was displayed.

FOOD FIRSTS

2012: USA

Patent is pending on the “Vegas Strip Steak,” which was unveiled on this day at the Protein Innovation Summit in Chicago as a new cut of meat: “The Vegas Strip Steak is the latest and perhaps last steak to be found from the beef carcass,” said Jacob Nelson, a value-added meat processing specialist.

Nelson, Tony Mata of Mata & Associates, and Rick Gresh, chef at David Burke’s Primehouse at The James Hotel in Chicago, Illinois, arranged an invitation-only dinner for the first sampling of the steak at the Trump International Hotel & Tower. Mata said later, “The Vegas Strip Steak was well received by the audience. They tasted it, loved it and applauded.”

THE PIE

2002: Australia, the Australian Meat Pie

The consumer organization *Choice* investigated the meat pie in 2002, and a summary of its findings was published in an editorial of the Melbourne newspaper *The Age* on this day.

The Australian Meat Pie: Part of their allure is undoubtedly convenience—a snug, palm-fitting size—but a sense of mystery is also involved. Few have eaten a pie without wondering, at some time, what all that pastry was hiding. The association has now answered that question. And while its findings may put some people off their food, pies remain as they ever were. It may be more accurate to market them as hot pies, rather than meat pies, except that many people (including the association’s testers) get theirs frozen and, as is well known by football fans, hot pies are not always hot.

The Australia New Zealand Food Authority describes “meat pie” as consisting of a cooked meat filling that is encased wholly or substantially in pastry. At

present the law requires meat pies to have a minimum of 25 percent meat.

Gail Kennedy, a spokeswoman for *Choice*, gave a rather worrying definition of meat as it applies to products such as the meat pie:

The definition of meat is broadly embracing—well beyond the muscle tissue of cattle, which is how we normally think of meat—and includes fat, gristle, trimming, meat scraps. In fact, all parts of many animals, except the foetus is excluded. You could have gravies enriched, quite legally, by blood, and that could be a percentage of the meat as defined as meat.

FOOD & WAR

1780: American Revolutionary War

The Count of Rochambeau was commander in chief of the French Expeditionary Force which sailed to America to assist the Continental Army in its war against the British. Rochambeau boarded the flagship of the French fleet, the eighty-gun naval vessel *Duc de Bourgogne*, on April 17 but had to wait until May 2 for sufficient wind to set sail.

The galleys aboard this particular vessel were fitted with a bread oven. A decision had clearly been made that the officers were not to suffer the hard, weevil-ridden ships' biscuits that was the usual fare on such expeditions.

An “anonymous Bourbonnais grenadier” apparently commented: “There is nothing more ingenious than to have in such a place an oven for 50 to 52 loafs of bread of three pounds each! There is a master baker, a butcher, a cook for the officers and a scullion for the sailors and soldiers.”

ANNIVERSARY

1799: England

This was the birthday of Eliza Acton (d. February 13, 1859), the author of the classic and much respected *Modern Cookery for Private Families*, published in 1845. Her book was aimed at the domestic cook, and it was the first to list the ingredients separately from the method instructions. It contains the first printed

recipe for the famous English specialty, Bakewell pudding. There is no mention of pastry in Acton's recipe, but the dish is now more commonly made in a pastry shell and sold as Bakewell tart.

Bakewell Pudding

This pudding is famous not only in Derbyshire, but in several of our northern counties, where it is usually served on all holiday-occasions. Line a shallow tart-dish with quite an inch deep layer of several kinds of good preserve mixed together, and intermingle with them from two to three ounces of candied citron or orange-rind. Beat well the yolks of ten eggs, and add to them gradually half a pound of sifted sugar; when they are well mixed, pour in by degrees half a pound of good clarified butter, and a little ratifia or any other flavour that may be preferred; fill the dish two thirds full with this mixture, and bake the pudding for nearly an hour in a moderate oven. Half the quantity will be sufficient for a small dish.

Mixed preserves, 1 ½ to 2 lbs.; yolks of eggs, 10; sugar, ½ lb.; butter, ½ lb.; ratifia, lemon-brandy, or other flavouring to the taste: baked, moderate oven, ¾ to 1 hour.

Obs.—This is a rich and expensive, but not a very refined pudding. A variation of it, known in the south as an Alderman's Pudding is, we think, superior to it. It is made without the candied peel, and with a layer of apricot-jam only, six ounces of butter, six of sugar, the yolks of six, and the whites of two eggs.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1841: Australia

From the journal of Edward John Eyre (1815–1901) on an expedition into the inland of central Australia:

Being rather better to-day, I was obliged to overcome my repugnance to the disagreeable food we were compelled to resort to, and the ice once broken, I found that although it was far from being palatable, I could gradually accustom myself to it. The boys after breakfast again went down to the

reconcile myself to it. The boys after breakfast again went down to the carcase, and spent the whole day roasting and eating, and at night they again returned to the camp loaded. We turned all the meat upon the strings and redipped it in sea water again to-day, but the weather was unfavourable for drying it, being cold and damp. Both yesterday and to-day light showers fell sufficient to moisten the grass.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1787: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde. He entertained some friends on this day.

This being my Rotation Day . . . We had for Dinner some Skaite and Oyster Sauce, Knuckle of Veal and a Tongue, a fine Fore Quarter of Lamb and plumb Pudding. 2nd Course, Asparagus, Lobster, Raspberry Tartlets, black Caps set into Custard &c. We had also Cucumbers and Radishes.

1937: London and Paris

This was the wedding day of English writer Evelyn Waugh. He wrote in his diary: "Early Mass . . . Breakfast St James's . . . and to church where got married to Laura. . . . caught aeroplane (*to Paris*) . . . dined Tour d'Argent, pressed duck, wild strawberries, Musigny '14. Caught Rome Express in exact time."

Pressed duck: See April 29.

APRIL 18

DICKENS & THE PRESS CLUB

1868: New York

Charles Dickens was honored at a dinner given by the New York Press Club during his second visit to America. He described it as the "best dinner."

MENU

Huitres

Potages.

Consommé à la Sevigné, Crème d'asperges.

Hors d'Oevres.

Les petites Tim-balles à la Dickens.

Poissons.

Truites à laVictoria; Pass à la Itallienne.

Relevés.

Fillet de boeuf à la Lucullus; Agneau farci à la Walter Scott.

Entrees.

Filets de Brants à la Signora; Croustade de ris de veau à l'Anglaise;

Cotelettes à la Fenimore Cooper; Galantine à la Royale; Aspics de foie gras histories.

Sorbets.

A l'Americaine.

Rotis.

Becassines, poulets de graine truffes.

Entremets.

Tomates, petits pois, artichauts, laitues braisées.

Sucres.

Soupirs à la Mantilini, Macedoine de fruits, Moscovates à l'Abrietos, Gelees au kumel,

Gateaux savarins et Viennois, Glaces a l'orange, Glaces variees.

Fruits et desert.

PIECES MONTEES.

Temple de la litterature, Trophée a l'auteur, Stars and Stripes, Pavilion International,

Armes britanniques, La loi du destin, Monument de Washington,

Colonne Triumphale.

There was an unexpected and far-reaching outcome of this banquet. There were few women journalists at the time, but one who did succeed in the field was Jennie Cunningham Croly (known by her pseudonym Jennie June). She was a member of the New York City Press Club, as was her husband, David G. Croly. Her application for a ticket to the affair was refused as were those of several other female journalists. Women simply did not attend public dinners at the time, and the Press Club saw no reason to change their policy in that regard. Jennie June and her female colleagues were offered seats behind a curtain so they could observe and listen to the proceedings but were not included in the banquet proper. The incident convinced Jennie June of the need for professional women to organize themselves, and she formed Sorosis, a women-only club out of which grew the Federation of Women's Clubs.

ANNIVERSARIES

1665: England

This was the birthday of Charles Townshend, second viscount, and later known as "Turnip" Townshend. He was a Whig politician and secretary of state for a number of years between 1714 and 1730. He was also an enthusiastic farmer whose efforts revolutionized animal husbandry. He gained his nickname because of his efforts to popularize the turnip as a useful plant for crop rotation (a relatively new idea at the time) which could also be used to feed stock over the winter.

Some of his associates may have found Townshend a little tedious at times. The poet Alexander Pope said of him that "he was particularly fond of that kind of

poet Alexander Pope said of him that he was particularly fond of that kind of rural improvement which arises from Turnips; it was the favourite subject of his conversation.”

U.S. STATE FOOD

1988: Oklahoma, USA

House Concurrent Resolution 1083 defined the official state meal as one of the state emblems. The meal was determined to reflect Oklahoma’s cultural, historical, and agricultural background and to “generally typify traditional southern foodways.” Components of the meal (which can be divided into breakfast, lunch, and dinner) are barbecue pork, chicken fried steak, sausages with biscuits and gravy, fried okra, squash, grits, corn, black-eyed peas, cornbread, and pecan pie.

The official meal has not been without its critics, who point to its high-fat, high-calorie makeup.

RESTAURANTS & HOTELS

1907: San Francisco, California, USA

The Fairmont Hotel on Nob Hill officially opened a year after originally intended, the delay being caused by the great earthquake of 1906 occurring a few days before the original planned date. The hotel was extensively damaged in the quake but avoided complete collapse thanks to its substantial columns.

The Merchants Association held a grand opening banquet to celebrate the rebirth of the hotel and the city. Exactly 950 guests sat down—twice the number at any previous event in the city—at the first banquet prepared in the kitchens of the new hotel. There was one waiter to every six guests.

After the banquet, at 9 pm precisely the president of the Merchants’ Association pressed a button which lit up 2,000 bulbs on the dome of the still-ruined City Hall, defining “the final burial of the past and the assurance that the greater, better future [was] at hand.”

The bill of fare featured 13,000 oysters, 600 pounds of turtle, a million tarts, and

\$5,000 worth of premier California and French wine.

FOOD & WAR

1900: South Africa, Boer War, The Siege of Mafeking

A report in the English *Daily News* on the conditions in Mafeking noted that: “Everything is proceeding satisfactorily inside the town. The natives are living on horseflesh, alternated with skilly, thus relieving the pressure on the food supplies.”

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769: Tahiti

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks:

“*Georges Land*” The Indians brought down so much provision of Cocoa nuts and bread fruit today that before night we were obliged to leave off buying and acquaint them by signs that we should not want any more for 2 days; every thing was bought for beads, a bead about as large as a pea purchasing 4 or 6 breadfruits and a like number of Cocoa nuts.

POTATO RIOTS

1812: Manchester, England, the Potato Riots

The developments of the Industrial Revolution led to great fear among factory workers who saw machines taking over their jobs. Conditions were already difficult, and many were hungry in early nineteenth-century Britain. The city of Manchester was a great industrial hub and the site of many riots. Often these were triggered by the cost of potatoes, a staple food of the urban poor.

On Saturday, the 18th April, a numerous body of women, chiefly women, assembled at the potato market, Shude Hill, where the sellers were asking 14s. and 15s. per load (252 lbs.) for potatoes. Some of the women began forcibly to take possession of the articles; but the civil and military power interposing, to fix a sort of maximum, for eight shillings per load, at which

they were sold in small portions. On Monday a cart carrying fourteen loads of meal was stopped, and the meal carried away. On 27th April a riotous assembly took place at Middleton. The weaving factory of Mr Burton and Sons had been previously threatened in consequence of their mode of weaving being done by the operation of steam.

DINNER WITH THE GRAND VIZIER'S LADY

1717: Turkey

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu enthusiastically embraced the experience of living briefly in Constantinople (Istanbul) with her ambassador husband. She wrote to her sister in England on this day and described an entertainment to which she was invited by the grand vizier's lady, "an Entertainment which was never given before to any Christian":

She entertain'd me with all kind of Civillity till Dinner came in, which was serv'd one Dish at a time, to a vast Number, all finely dress'd after their manner, which I do not think so bad as you have perhaps heard it represented. I am a very good Judge of their eating, having liv'd 3 weeks in the house of an Effendi at Belgrade who gave us very magnificent Dinners dress'd by his own Cooks, which the first week pleas'd me extremely, but I own I then begun to grow weary of it, and desir'd my own Cook might add a dish or 2 after our manner, but I attribute this to custom. I am very much enclin'd to believe an Indian that had never tasted of either would prefer their Cookery to ours. Their Sauces are very high, all the roast very much done. They use a great deal of rich spice. The Soop is served for the last dish; and they have at least as great Variety of ragouts as we have. I was very sorry I could not eat of as many as the good lady would have had me, who was very earnest in serving me of everything.

The Treat concluded with Coffee and perfumes, which is a high mark of respect, 2 slaves kneeling cens'd my Hair, Cloaths, and handkerchief. After this Ceremony she commanded her Slaves to play and dance, which they did with their Guitars in their hands and she excus'd to me their want of skill, saying she took no care to accomplish them in that art. I return'd her thanks and soon after took my Leave.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1770: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde. He was at dinner this day with fourteen others, and wrote in his diary:

I dined at old Mr Willm. Burge's being the day of Mr Wilke's enlargement . . . We had for dinner a boiled rump Beef 45pd. Weight, a Ham and half a dozen Fowls, a roasted Saddle of mutton, two very rich puddings, and a good Sallet with fine cucumber.

APRIL 19

SIMADAN DI PASOR

Bonaire, Netherlands Antilles

Simadan di Pasor is a folk festival which celebrates the sorghum harvest. Sorghum was a staple to the native peoples of the island, and in past times significant amounts were stored in the *Mangasina del Rey* (the storehouse of the king) to be shared out in times of poor harvest.

Although storage of sorghum is no longer required, the village still celebrates the importance of the crop in its history. There is much singing, dancing, and eating during the festival. Traditional local dishes are served such as goat soup, *funchi* (similar to grits, but more finely ground), *giambo* ("gumbo" okra soup), *repa* (pancakes made from sorghum meal), and *boontji kunuku* (beans).

The celebration of *Simadan di Pasor* takes place on two separate days in the townships of Nikiboko (on April 19) and Rincon (on April 20).

YARMOUTH CELEBRATES

1814: Yarmouth, England

The city and region of Great Yarmouth (one of the Cinque Ports) held a grand dinner on this day to celebrate the defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte and the

dinner on this day to celebrate the defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte and the restoration of King Louis XVIII to the throne of France.

The principal inhabitants of this town subscribed £1,106.8s.6d which sum was expended in providing a grand dinner for such as were residing in the town and chose to partake of it. Fifty-eight tables were spread in the open air, in succession, along the South Quay, at which 8083 persons were seated, who made an excellent dinner of the standard old English fare of roast beef, plum-pudding, and ale. Jacob Preston, Esq. the Mayor, presiding at one of the tables. The weather was extremely fine, and the whole passed off in the utmost harmony and conviviality. A man, personating Neptune in a car, attended by Tritons and other deities, paraded the town, with music, in procession, during the day, and the evening concluded with a grand bonfire on the North Denes, on which the effigy of Napoleon was consumed.

FOOD & THE LAW

1550: Scotland

A decree by the Privy Council for Scotland set the prices for various wild meats.

Similarly, with respect to the great and exorbitant shortage of wild meat in this kingdom, and to remedy this, it is devised and ordained that all wild meat shall be sold at the following prices. That is to say, first of all, crane and swan to be sold for 5s. each. The larger-sized wild geese, 2s. The barnacle goose, greylag goose, and brent goose for 18d. The partridge, 8d. The plover and small moorfowl, 5d. the blackcock and grey hen, 6d. Young game birds, 12d a dozen. The larger curlew, 6d. the rabbit, 12d. the hare 2d. Woodcocks, 4d. A dozen larks or other small birds, 4d. a dozen. Snipe 2d each.

FOOD & WAR

1864: USA, Civil War

Frances W. Wallace kept a diary during a journey to and from her home in Kentucky to visit her husband, Philip Hugh Wallace, a Confederate officer stationed in Alabama.

Left Dr. Boyd's for Meridian, Mally, Hattie, the children and I; Sargeant Posey driving us, a mule drawing the wagon with the trunks. Hattie left her baby with Mrs. Boyd. How kind the doctor and his wife have been to us. We fared very well and missed nothing but coffee, they use cornmeal parched for coffee, and except for that they live very well. We will now, I fear, find rough fare.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769: Tahiti

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks:

“*Georges Land*” This morn Lycurgus and his wife come to see us . . . seemd more sensible than any of his fellow cheifs . . . He eat pork and bread fruit which was brought him in a basket using salt water instead of sauce, and then retir'd into my bedchamber and slept about half an hour.

1806: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day Meriwether Lewis wrote:

[T]here was great joy with the natives last night in consequence of the arrival of the Salmon; . . . this fish was dressed and being divided into small peices was given to each child in the village. this custom is founded in a supersticious opinion that it will hasten the arrival of the salmon. . . . we have now only one small kettle to a mess of 8 men.

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

Mr. Phillips found a flesh-coloured drupaceous oblong fruit, about half an inch long, with a very glutinous pericarp, containing a slightly compressed rough stone: in taste it resembled the fruit of *Loranthus*, and the birds, particularly the cockatoos, appeared very fond of it. We all ate a great quantity of them, without the slightest injury. It grows on a small tree, and

quantity of them, without the slightest injury. It grew on a small tree, and had a persistent calyx.

1914: Brazil

From Theodore Roosevelt's narrative of his expedition *Through the Brazilian Wilderness*:

For four days there were no rapids we could not run without unloading. Then, on the April 19th, we got a canoe from Senhor Barbosa. He was a most kind and hospitable man, who also gave us a duck and a chicken and some mandioc and six pounds of rice, and would take no payment.

APRIL 20

FUNERAL FARE

1698: Germany

At the funeral of the elector Ernest August of Hanover on this date, those attending sat down to the following dishes:

First Service: Chickens; hashed veal; fish; soup; hot pastry; a roast; boiled lamb; fish; boiled ox-tongue; stewed beef; soup; fish; boiled veal; jack [?]; fowls, veal and spinach; boiled beef.

Second Service: Stewed fruits; blackcock; capons; saddle of venison; chickens; partridges; roast hare, salad; roast lamb; roast veal; roast pigeons; roast doe; woodcocks, cakes; roasted tongue; roast blackbirds; jelly of suckling pig.

FOOD & THE LAW

1923: London, England

The proposed Liquor Traffic Prohibition Bill was debated in the House of Commons—the first time Parliament had ever debated a prohibition bill. It was resoundingly defeated, the vote being 236–14.

U.S. STATE FOOD

2011: Maine, USA

The state legislature approved blueberry pie made with Maine blueberries as the state dessert and Whoopie Pie as the state treat. As with similar bills in other states, the move generated criticism from those who believed that the legislature should concern itself with more serious issues.

FOOD & BOOKS

1892: USA, *Science in the Kitchen*

Ella Eaton Kellogg, the wife of Dr. John Harvey Kellogg of cornflake fame, completed the preface of her book *Science in the Kitchen* on this day. The Kelloggs had no biological children, but they fostered many and adopted seven. Her husband said of her after her death that

For more than twenty years, she prepared the bills of fare for breakfast, dinner and supper for the tables of both patients and helpers at the Sanitarium,—a family aggregating from a thousand to fifteen hundred persons,—six separate menus every day in the year.

Ella Kellogg's book has the full title of *Science in the Kitchen. A Scientific Treatise on Food Substances and Their Dietetic Properties, Together with a Practical Explanation of the Principles of Healthful Cookery, and a Large Number of Original, Palatable, and Wholesome Recipes*. The principles espoused were those of a vegetarian diet high in grains and nuts, with no condiments, and no coffee or other stimulant beverages allowed.

The book contained sample daily menus such as the following:

- BREAKFAST
- Fresh Fruits
- Graham Grits and Cream
- Prune Toast

- Graham Puffs
- Cream Crisps
- Strawberries
- Caramel Coffee or Hot Milk
- DINNER
- Vegetable Broth with Toasted Rolls
- Baked Potato with Pease Gravy
- Stewed Asparagus
- Cracked Wheat and Cream
- Whole-Wheat Bread
- Canned Berries
- Manioca with Fruit
- Caramel Coffee or Hot Milk

FOOD & WAR

1864: USA, Civil War

Rations for prisoners of war were set down on this day by the commissary general of prisoners. As of April 20, the amounts were as follows:

- Pork or bacon, 10 oz. or Fesh or salt beef, 14 oz.
- Flour or bread (soft,) 18 oz., or Hard bread, 14 oz., or Cornmeal, 18 oz.
- To each 100 rations: Beans or pea; Molasses, 1 qt; Potatoes, 30 lbs; Pepper [no amount given]

By June 1, the following changes were made:

Sugar and coffee or tea issued to sick and wounded only, every other day, on recommendation of surgeon in charge, at the rate of 12 pounds sugar, 5 pounds ground or 7 pounds green coffee, or 1 pound tea to every 100 rations.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769: Tahiti

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks:

Raind hard all this day at intervals, so much so that we could not stir at all, the people however went on briskly with the fortification in spite of weather. Lycurgus dind with us, he imitates our manners in every instance already holding a knife and fork more handily than a Frenchman could learn to do in years. Notwithstanding the rain some provisions are brought to the market which is kept just without the lines; indeed ever since we have been here we have had more breadfruit every day than both the people and hogs can eat, but in the pork way we have been so poorly supplyd that I beleive fresh pork has not been servd to the ships company above once.

1828: Timbuktu

René Caillé reached Timbuktu on this day and was the first European to do so and live to tell the tale.

At length we arrived safely at Timbuctoo, just as the sun was touching the horizon. . . . I took up my abode with Sidi-Abdallahi, who received me in the most friendly manner. . . . He invited me to sup with him; and an excellent couscous of millet and mutton was served up. Six of us partook of the dish and we ate with our fingers; but in as cleanly a way as was possible under such circumstances. Sidi-Abdallahi, according to the custom of his countrymen, did not say a word to me.

1841: Australia

From the journal of Edward John Eyre (1815–1861) on an expedition into the

FROM THE JOURNAL OF EDWARD JOHN EYRE (1815–1901) ON AN EXPEDITION INTO THE inland of central Australia. The previous evening he had examined the remaining meat from the horse they had killed and found “a great deal of it was found to be getting putrid, or fly-blown, and we were obliged to pick it over, and throw what was tainted away.”

On this day he wrote: “To-day I had all the meat boiled, as I thought it would keep better cooked than raw, we had only a small tin saucepan without a handle, to effect our cooking operations attacked with dysentery.”

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1737: Shalstone House, Buckinghamshire, England

Elizabeth Purefoy sent an order to her fishmonger, in which she mentions the smallpox epidemic affecting the local area:

To James Fisher, fishmonger of Newgate, London.

I desire Mr ffisher to send mee every week as much ffish as will come to 3s or 3s 6d a week, except it be such weeks as you can send mackerel—then send them & no other fish. The town of Buckingham has been so afflicted with ye small pox we have no communication there till now, & what sea fish we have [comes] from Oxford.

1796: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde. He dined at the home of a friend and made a point of noting that the bread was partly made from barley flour. There were serious wheat shortages for a number of years at this time, across Europe, and alternatives to wheat were being promoted and in some instances mandated.

Dinner was soon announced after our Arrival, which consisted of the following things, Salmon boiled and Shrimp Sauce, some White Soup, Saddle of Mutton rosted & Cucumber &c., Lambs Fry, Tongue, Breast of Veal ragoued, rice Pudding and the best part of a Rump of Beef stewed immediately after the Salmon was removed. 2nd Course. A Couple of Spring Chicken, rosted Sweetbreads, Jellies, Maccaroni, frill'd Oysters, 2.

small Crabs, & made Dish of Eggs. N.B. No kind of pastrey, no Wheat Flour made use of and even the melted butter was thickened with Wheat-Meal, and the Bread all brown Wheat-Meal with one part in four of Barley Flour. The Bread was well made and eat very well indeed, may we never eat worse.

APRIL 21

THE ENGLISH ROYALS IN PARIS

1914: Paris

The king and queen of England were entertained at the Elysée Palace on this day. A horseshoe-shaped table was decorated with Dorothy Perkins roses and orchids, and the food was served on Sèvres china. The menu was as follows:

MENU

Potage: Tortue Claire

Mousseline de volaille

Croustade à la Montglas

Truite saumoné de la Loire à la Victoria.

Agneau de Pauillac Massenet

Suprême de Gelignottes Ambassadrice

Noisette de foie gras grand duc

Spoom au Cliquot

Granite à la mandarinette

Poularde de Bresse

Truffles à la broche

Petit jambon glacé au Marsala

Salade Montfermeuil

Asperges en branches sauce crème

Champignons de rosée à la meunière

Glace Francillon

Petits palmiers

DESSERT

Vins

Porto Doré

Chablis

Médoc

Champagne: Château Yquem 1887

Chambertin 1889

Louis Roederer extra dry.

FOOD & WAR

1746: Scotland

The City of Glasgow held a “cake and wine” banquet on this day to formally celebrate the defeat of the Jacobites at Culloden on April 16, and to present the freedom of the city to the Duke of Cumberland, the commander of the British forces who had successfully put the rebellion to an end.

1933: Germany

Three months after Adolf Hitler came to power, the Nazis banned *shechita* (the

Jewish Orthodox method of ritual slaughter of animals intended for food) and the importation of kosher meat. It was claimed that the method was inhumane, but the real reason—the control of the Jewish population—was not in any doubt.

BEER RIOT

1855: Chicago, Illinois, USA, the Lager Beer Riot

Chicago's first civil disturbance erupted over the Sunday closing of taverns and saloons and ended with one death and sixty arrests. The city election, which had taken place on March 6, had been an overwhelming victory for a right-wing law-and-order coalition with substantial support from temperance advocates. The new mayor and council members immediately increased liquor licence fees, shortened licence terms to three months, tripled the size of the police force, and began enforcing an old ordinance on Sunday closing of liquor outlets. The action was believed to be aimed at German and Irish migrants.

A huge crowd gathered to support a defendant charged with breaching the law, and in the nature of such things, the crowd became a mob, a riot started, guns were fired, the militia was called in, and the protest was settled with the aid of Gatling guns.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1861: Australia

Robert O'Hara Burke and William John Wills, of the illfated Burke and Wills expedition, arrived at the depot at Cooper's Creek, finding it had been abandoned by their colleagues earlier in that same day. Wills noted in his diary their disappointment and mentioned their severe symptoms of malnourishment:

Brahe has fortunately left us ample provisions to take us to the bounds of civilisation, namely flour, 50 lb., rice, 20 lb., oatmeal, 60 lb., sugar, 60 lb., and dried meat 15 lb. . . . It is most fortunate that these symptoms, which so clearly affected him (Gray), did not come on us until we were reduced to an exclusively animal diet of such an inferior description as that offered by the flesh of a worn-out and exhausted horse. We were not long in getting out the grub that Brahe had left, and we made a good supper off some oatmeal porridge and sugar. This, together with the excitement of finding ourselves

porridge and sugar. This, together with the excitement of finding ourselves in such a peculiar and almost unexpected position, had a wonderful effect in removing the stiffness from our legs. Whether it is possible that the vegetables can have so affected us, I know not: but both Mr Burke and I remarked a most decided relief and a strength in the legs greater than we had had for several days. I am inclined to think that but for the abundance of portulac that we obtained on the journey, we should scarcely have returned to Cooper's Creek at all.

Portulaca or *purslane* is a flowering plant which is widely distributed in the tropics and mild temperate regions of the world. It is considered as either a weed or a valuable source of food, raw or cooked, depending on the circumstances.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1888: Arles, France

Vincent van Gogh wrote to his brother Theo:

I am very glad you have taken lessons in eating from young Koning. He is thoroughly well up on it: and it's amusing to eat with that budding young artist. . . . But indeed, it will do you good to have breakfast. I do it here myself, and eat two eggs every morning. My stomach is very weak, but I hope to be able to get it right; it will take time and patience. In any case I am really much better already than in Paris. . . . Besides, one doesn't really seem to need a great deal of food here, and while I think of it, I want to tell you that more and more I doubt the truth of the legend of Monticelli drinking such enormous quantities of absinthe. When I look at his work, I can't think it possible that a man who was flabby with drink could have done that.

1919: USA

Future president Harry S. Truman, who had been on active military duty in France, sent a telegram to his sweetheart Bess, letting her know that he had arrived home from the war:

Camp Mills, N.Y., Apr. 21, 1919 ARRIVED IN CAMP MILLS EASTER
AFTERNOON. HAVE BEEN EATING PIE AND ICE CREAM EVER

SINCE. WIRE ME HERE USUAL ADDRESS. HOPE TO BE IN FUNSTON SOON. NEW YORK GAVE US A GRAND WELCOME. GOD'S COUNTRY SURE LOOKS GOOD. HARRY

APRIL 22

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1865: USA

Patent No. 14,722, was granted to Eben Norton Horsford, of the Rumford Chemical Works, for an “improvement in preparing phosphoric acid as a substitute for other solid acids . . . for use in the manufacture of soda-powders and other similar compounds where a dry acid is required.” The product was prepared from “carefully washed and burned bones.”

Another highly significant use for this powder mentioned in the patent application was as “a substitute for cream-tartar and tartaric acid in the preparation of yeast-powder or baking-powder.”

COOKING SCHOOLS

1885: London, England

A French cookery exhibition and competition opened in London on this day, with “the best chefs in private families, clubs, and hotels, as exhibitors.”

The *Times* reported the event:

Perhaps it was with a kindly desire to encourage compatriots who had expatriated themselves for the benefit of a people who habitually feed well but seldom dine well, that a distinguished Parisian chef assured the promoters of the *Concourse Culinaire Artistique*, opened yesterday in Willis' Rooms, that their “International Exhibition of French Cookery” was far superior to anything of the time which had been attempted in Paris.

Of three chief prizes awarded, the first goes to Mr Léon de Bretagne, who presents *chaudfroids* of quails and larks, of lamb cutlets and filleted

chicken, a pyramid of plovers' eggs, *pâtisserie* with *pastafroles*, *ruches de meringues*, and jellies, in which the enclosed strawberries appear in luscious roundness. Mr. Juste Menager takes second prize for two prettily designed dishes, one of ortolans, the other of fillets of chicken set in stands, ornamented with naturalistic wreaths done in isinglass. But the centerpiece of this collection is as ingenious and appropriate to the occasion as it is skillfully executed. This, a large white casket for Easter eggs, is made of cuttle-fish bone elaborately carved and set with egg medallions, dyed, and delicately cut to produce the effect of intaglios. . . . "That," said a *chef*, pointing to a small temple worked in icing sugar, the handiwork of Mr. Boitel, "ought to be in South Kensington."

The most surprising sculpting material, however, was perhaps mutton fat:

Mutton fat would not by the uninitiated be thought a promising material for artistic manipulation; but if the visitor is curious enough to inquire, he will learn that some of the most highly finished and cleverly modelled flowers and animals figuring in the decorative compositions for the table are fashioned of fat. The cook disdains to use plaster of Paris, and boasts that his best work is edible. It is of suet that the genealogical tree designed by Mr. Louis Cebat, chef at the Freemasons' Tavern, is made. Each branch of this arborescent adipose biography bears a dated label, and, in miniature, some dish invented by a cook whose school may be traced to the master on whom he modelled his style. The tragic end of Vatel, who is represented to have slain himself with his own sword in a fit of despair at the failure of the expected supply of fish for dinner, is symbolised by a broken branch. The *menu* presented suggests "darnes de saumon à la Vatel; petits poulets printaniers à la Carême; timbale d'écrevisses à la Thiou; pain de volaille à la Guipièro; estomac de pintade à la Chandelier; côtelettes d'agneau à la Benoit; aspic de foies gras à l'Eliot; chœufroid de cailles à la Tavenet; turban de filets de soles à la Guignard; queues de homard à la Duglerêt; mauviettes en caisse à la Vincent la Chapelle; and crème de crabe à la Francatelli." Under this fateful tree, oxen, sheep, ducks and poultry, game and small birds disport themselves, and fish, just caught, lie on the green borders of a transparent stream of isinglass.

FOOD FOR ROGUES & STURDY VAGAGABONDS

1588: Bury, England

The justices of the peace in Bury made some decisions in regard to the diet to be provided in the house of correction. Reference was made to two previous acts in Queen Elizabeth I's reign. The first, in 1571, was entitled "An Acte for punishment of Vacabonds, and for releife of the Poore and Impotent." The second was in 1585 and was "An Acte for setting of the Poore to work, and for the avoydinge of idleness." The decisions made on April 22, 1588, reminded of the regulations made in these acts (which appear not to have been enforced) and gave power to the authorities "to see that the said Acts and Statuts be putt in due execution." To this end, the justices also determined that

There shall be builded or provided one convenient house, which shall be called the House of Correction, and that the same shall be established with in the towne of Bury . . . for the punishing and suppressing of rogues, vagabonds; idle, loitering, and lewde persons, which doe or shall hereafter wander, and go aboute within . . . in the said county of Suffolk, contrary to the Lawes in that case made and provided.

Potential inmates of the house were further clarified in the document. The persons to be apprehended, committed, and brought to the house of correction included jugglers, peddlers, and tinkers who had not obtained licenses for their "wanderings," "scholars of Oxford and Cambridge that go about begging, common labourers who refused to work," and "[a]ll Irishe men or women, of any of the sortes abovenamed, and living by begging."

A great number of rules were established for this institution. In relation to the daily diet of its guests, the order says:

Item, It is ordered, that every person committed to the said house, shall have for their daily dietts, theis portions of meate and drinke followinge . . . At every dynner and supper on the fleshe daies, bread made of rye, viiiij [8] ounces troye waight, with a pynte of porridge, a quarter of a pound of fleshe, and a pint of beare [beer], of the rate of iij [3]s a barrell, every barrell to conteyne xxxvj [36] gallands; and on every fyshe daie at dynner an supper the like quantitie, made eyther of mill [meal] or pease or such lyke, and the thurd part of a pound of chese, or one good heringe, or twoe white or redd, accordinge as the keper of the house shall thinke meete.

Item, It is ordered, that such persons as will applie their worke, shall have allowance of beare and a little bread between meales, as the keper of the house shall fvnde that he do deserve in his said worke.

Item, It is ordered, that they which will not worke shall have noe allowance but bread and beare onley, untill they will conforme themselves to work.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1841: Australia

From the journal of Edward John Eyre (1815–1901) on an expedition into the inland of central Australia:

Upon weighing the meat this morning, which as usual was left out upon the strings at night, I discovered that four pounds had been stolen by some of the boys, whilst we were sleeping. I had suspected that our stock was diminishing rapidly for a day or two past, and had weighed it overnight that I might ascertain this point, and if it were so, take some means to prevent it for the future. With so little food to depend upon, and where it was so completely in the power of any one of the party, to gratify his own appetite at the expense of the others, during their absence, or when they slept, it became highly necessary to enforce strict honesty towards each other; I was much grieved to find that the meat had been taken by the natives, more particularly as their daily allowance had been so great. We had, moreover, only two days' supply of the meat left for the party, and being about to commence the long journey before us, it was important to economise our provisions to support us under the fatigue and labours we should then have to undergo.

Having deducted the four pounds stolen during the night, from the daily rations of the three boys, I gave them the remainder, (eight pounds) telling them the reason why their quantity was less to-day than usual, and asking them to point out the thief, who alone should be punished and the others would receive their usual rations. The youngest of the three boys, and the King George's Sound native, resolutely denied being concerned in the robbery; but the other native doggedly refused to answer any questions about it, only telling me that he and the native from King George's Sound would leave me and make their way by themselves. I pointed out to them the folly, in fact the impossibility almost, of their succeeding in any attempt of the kind; advised them to remain quietly where they were, and behave well for the future, but concluded by telling them that if they were bent

upon going they might do so, as I would not attempt to stop them.

. . . Unaccustomed to impose the least restraint upon their appetites or passions, they considered it a hardship to be obliged to walk as long as any horses were left alive, though they saw those horses falling behind and perishing from fatigue; they considered it a hardship, too, to be curtailed in their allowance of food, as long as a mouthful was left unconsumed; . . .

The excess of animal food they had had at their command for some few days after the horse was killed, made them forget their former scarcity, and in their folly they imagined that they could supply their own wants, and get on better and more rapidly than we did, and they determined to attempt it. .

. . One of them had been with me a great length of time, and the other I had brought from his country and his friends, and to both I felt bound by ties of humanity to prevent if possible their taking the rash step they meditated; my remonstrances and expostulations were however in vain, and after getting their breakfasts, they took up some spears they had been carefully preparing for the last two days, and walked sulkily from the camp in a westerly direction. . . . Finding that the single sheep we had left would now be the cause of a good deal of trouble, I had it killed this afternoon, that we might have the full advantage of it whilst we had plenty of water, and might be enabled to hoard our bread a little. We had still a little of the horseflesh left, and made a point of using it all up before the mutton was allowed to be touched.

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia: "I have mentioned a small round eatable tuber, which I found in the basket of a native gin on the 2nd January. I here found it to be the large end of the tap root of a *Potamogeton*, or a plant nearly allied to that genus."

Potamogeton is genus of common aquatic plants commonly known as pondweed. Many species of the plant exist, and the starchy roots and stems of most can be eaten either cooked or raw.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1663: London, England

From Samuel Pepys's diary: "[A]nd so to my uncle Wight's, by invitation, whither my father, wife, and Ashwell came, where we had but a poor dinner, and not well dressed; besides, the very sight of my aunt's hands and greasy manner of carving, did almost turn my stomach."

APRIL 23

VINALIA PRIORA

Ancient Rome

Two wine festivals were celebrated each year by the ancient Romans. April 23 was the urban Roman wine festival, *Vinalia urbana* (or *priora*), at which the wine from the preceding harvest was tasted and an offering made to Jupiter. The second took place on August 19 and was the *Vinalia rustica* (or *altera*).

SAINT GEORGE'S DAY

Saint George is a patron saint of many countries, professions, and organizations and of the sufferers of a number of diseases. His day is celebrated in a number of different ways.

Albania: It was traditional to have a picnic by flowing springs in honor of the national hero George Castriota. Each person would weigh him- or herself while holding a sweet-smelling herb and a stone to auger well for the future.

Turkey: The day is also National Sovereignty Day and Children's Day. It commemorates the founding of the National Assembly and honors children—who are provided with free ice cream.

Bermuda: Saint George is the patron saint of Bermuda, and the town of St. George is named for him. The day is also called Peppercorn Day because it was the day that the annual rent of one peppercorn for the use of the old state house in St. George was due.

England: Saint George is also the patron saint of England and of many English organizations. The famous French chef Antonin Carême (1784–1833) was for a time chef to the Prince Regent (the future George III), and he is said to have

dedicated his own version of hare soup to Saint George. The recipe in *The Cook and Housewife's Manual* (1826) is attributed by the author to Carême.

Potage de Lévrants a la Saint George

Carême's receipt for Hare-soup, named from St George the Patron Saint of England.

Take the fillets from two leverets, cut up their carcasses, and sweat them with a little fresh butter over a slow stove, mix in a spoonful of flour, and let them sweat a few minutes longer; then add half a bottle of champagne, one of claret, and four ladlefuls of *consommé*, a pottle of mushrooms, a truffle cut in quarters, two onions, and a bunch of parsley tied up, with half a bay-leaf, a little thyme, basil, marjoram, and savory, whole pepper, two cloves, mace, cayenne, and a clove of garlic. Let this boil gently by the side of a stove, and skim it; strain, and reduce it one-fourth, and when serving put it into the tureen in which you have placed the fillets of the leverets *sautéd* in escalopes (cut in scallop shapes and fried), and thirty small quenelles made of the flesh of a partridge, with three bottles of mushrooms turned, cut in ribbons; and four truffles sliced and sautéd in butter. The ingredients composing this soup require much care that they be perfectly done, and of a relishing flavour. The soup must not boil, or the escalopes will become hard.

SHAKESPEARE'S BIRTHDAY

1880: Birmingham, England

William Shakespeare was born on April 23, 1564, and Shakespeare clubs all over the world celebrate the day, often with a special dinner. The Shakespeare Club of Birmingham in 1880 sat down to the following menu on this day:

THE BILL OF FARE

"The feast smells well."—*Coriolanus*, IV. v.

Soups

Mock Turtle and Clear Oxtail.

“That’s meat and drink to me.”—*Merry Wives of Windsor*, I. i.

Fish.

Salmon. Fillet Soles.

“From Trent and Severn hitherto.”—*Henry IV.*, III. i,

“There is salmons in both.”—*Henry V*, IV, vii.

“Sole sir o’ the world,”—*Anthony and Cleopatra*, V. ii,

Entrées.

Sweetbreads. Mutton Cutlets. Stewed Kidneys.

“The dainties that are bred,”—*Love’s Labour Lost*, IV. ii.

“Would eat mutton on Fridays.”—*Measure for Measure*, III. ii.

Removes.

Lamb. Sirloin of Beef. Saddle of Mutton. Tongues.

Roast and Boiled Chickens.

“Not a man shall pass his quarter.”—*Timon of Athens*, V. vi.

“I am a great eater of beef.”—*Twelfth Night*, I. iii.

“I have no tongue, sir.”—*Henry IV.* II, ii.

Entremets.

Ducklings and Green Peas. Tamercans.

“O dainty duck! O dear!”—*Midsummer Nights Dream*, V. i.

Sweets.

Soufflet and Cabinet Puddings. Lemon Cream, Jellies,

Blancmanges, Ices.

“Blessed Pudding.”—*Othello* II, i,

“To jelly with the act of fear.”—*Hamlet*, I, ii,

“A piece of ice.”—*Taming of the Shrew*, IV. i.

“Biting cold.”—*Henry VI.*, III, ii,

Dessert.

FOOD & THE LAW

1516: Bavaria

An early customer-protection law was signed into law by Duke Wilhelm IV. The Beer Purity Law specified that beer may only contain three ingredients: barley, hops, and water.

How beer should be served and brewed in summer and winter in the principality

Herewith, we decree, order, express and wish, together with the Privy Council, that from this day forth everywhere in the Principality of Bavaria, in the countryside as in the towns and marketplaces, wherever no other specific ordinance applies, from St. Michael’s Day until St. George’s Day a measure [a Bavarian measure = 1.069 liters] or head [a bowl-shaped container for fluids, not quite equal to a measure] of beer shall not be sold for more than one pfennig of Munich currency, and from St. George’s Day until St. Michael’s Day a measure shall not be sold for more than two pfennigs of the same currency, nor a head for more than three heller. Violators of this decree shall be punished as prescribed below.

Whoever should brew, or otherwise have, a beer other than Maerzen is forbidden, under any circumstances, to serve or sell a measure for more than one pfennig. We especially wish that, from this point on and everywhere in the countryside as well as in the towns and marketplaces, nothing is to be added to or used in beer other than barley, hops and water.

Whosoever knowingly disobeys this decree will be severely punished by the court having jurisdiction over him by having his barrel of beer confiscated whenever this offence occurs. However, whenever an innkeeper buys one, two or three pails [60 measures] of beer from any brewery in the countryside as well as in the towns and marketplaces and serves it again to the common peasantry, he alone is allowed to give and serve it for one heller more than the price of the measure or head of beer stipulated above

Decreed by Wilhelm IV, Duke in Bavaria, in Ingoldstadt, on St. George's Day in the year 1516.

A GIANT PIE

1789: London, England

A thanksgiving ceremony was held in St. Paul's Cathedral, for the recovery of King George III from "his late state of insanity."

Many communities around the country celebrated his health in various ways. In Norfolk, the people of the town of Holt held a public dinner in the marketplace. Five hundred local folk sat down to boiled beef and plum puddings, after which they danced the evening away in the Shire Hall.

In the small Yorkshire village of Denby Dale around this time, the womenfolk gave thanks in their own way by making a pie of gigantic proportions—and starting a grand tradition of such celebratory offerings (*see* September 3).

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1825: Britain

An early British patent for food preservation was granted to Thomas Alexander Roberts. Roberts proposed a method of preserving potatoes by taking them when thoroughly ripe, and before they have grown in the spring, and cutting out or otherwise destroying the eyes or germs. Carrots, turnips, and other vegetables, he said, could be similarly preserved by having the germinating parts cut out.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1661: London, England

Samuel Pepys was witness to the coronation service and banquet of King Charles II.

Coronacion Day. . . . went round the abby to Westminster hall. . . . I stood and saw the King come in with all the persons (but the Souldiers) that were in the cavalcade . . . and all set themselves down at their several tables—and that was a rare sight. And the King's first Course carried up by the Knights of the bath . . . and my Lord of Abimarles going to the Kitchin and eat a bit of the first dish that was to go to the King's table [to check for poison]. . . . And at the Lords' table I met with Wll. Howe and he spoke to my Lord for me and he did give him four rabbits and a pullet; and so I got it, and Mr. Creed and I got Mr. Mitchell to give us some bread and so we at a Stall eat it, was everybody else did what they could get.

1667: London, England

John Evelyn described a dinner for the Knights of the Garter and the “scramble” which followed:

In the morning, his Majesty went to chapel with the Knights of the Garter . . . and lastly proceeded to the banqueting-house to a great feast. The King sat on an elevated throne at the upper end at a table alone; the Knights at a table on the right hand, reaching all the length of the room; over against them a cupboard of rich gilded plate; at the lower end, the music; on the balusters above, wind music, trumpets, and kettle-drums. The King was served by the lords and pensioners who brought up the dishes. About the middle of the dinner, the Knights drank the King's health, then the King, theirs, when the trumpets and music played and sounded, the guns going off at the Tower. At the Banquet, came in the Queen, and stood by the King's left hand, but did not sit. Then was the banqueting-stuff flung about the room profusely. In truth, the crowd was so great, that though I stayed all the supper the day before, I now stayed no longer than this sport began, for fear of disorder. The cheer was extraordinary, each Knight having forty dishes to his mess, piled up five or six high; the room hung with the richest tapestry.

1898: Japan

From the journal of Gertrude Bell, who was in Japan on a round-the-world trip:

[T]rain to Maiku which we reached about 12. Took Kuromas and went out to a grove of twisted pine trees by the beach, where we stopped and had lunch at a tea house—omelet, made alas! with sugar, fish boiled and floating in water and tori nabe which was made before us on a hibatche [*sic*]. With rice and tea this made a good meal.

Tori nabe is a one-pot dish of chicken and vegetables, commonly cooked at the table.

APRIL 24

SAINT MARK'S EVE

Saint Mark's Eve was one of the numerous opportunities in olden times for “amatory divinations,” when young women would perform various rituals in the hope of seeing the image of their future husband in their dreams. The specific details of the process varied a little from place to place but usually involved the making and eating of “dumb cakes.” The name of the cakes probably comes from the silence that was supposed to be maintained throughout the ritual.

The cakes were made according to the formula “an eggshell full of salt, and eggshell full of malt, and an eggshell full of barley meal,” the dough then being baked in small cakes on the griddle or in a pan. They were not meant to be a gourmet treat, and only a tiny bite was taken, the young women in some areas then completing the ritual by walking backward to bed.

DEATH BY THE SWORD

1671: France

François Vatel, maître d'hôtel to Nicolas Fouquet, the superintendent of finances, impaled himself on his own sword in the early morning of this day, distraught and embarrassed because the fish he had ordered to serve King Louis XIV had not been delivered. Tragically, the fish delivery was delayed, not

forgotten, and arrived a short time later.

The best-known account of the event comes from the prolific correspondent *Mme. De Sévigné*, in a letter to her daughter:

Here is what I learned on coming home, which I can hardly get out of my head, and which I hardly know how to tell you: It is that Vatel, the great Vatel, maître d'hôtel to M. Fouquet who was at present with M. le Prince (de Conde), this man of a nobility which distinguished him above all others, whose good head was capable of sustaining all the cares of a state—this man, who I know, seeing at eight o'clock this morning the shipment of seafood had not arrived was not able to bear the blow which he saw was going to fall on him, and, in a word, killed himself with his sword. You may imagine the horrible disorder which such a terrible misfortune caused to the fête. Imagine that the fish arrived, perhaps just as he died. I know nothing more at present; I think you will find this enough. I do not doubt but that the confusion must have been great. It is a grievous thing at a fête costing 50,000 écus.

The previous evening, a light supper of turtle soup, creamed chicken, fried trout, and roast pheasant had been served. More guests had turned up than were expected, and Vatel feared that some tables were not served enough roasts. His staff assured him that the guests were all happy, but he was already anxious and upset. When the fish did not turn up when expected, he went to his rooms, wrote a note saying "The shame is too much to bear," fixed his sword in the door frame, and stabbed himself (eight times, according to some reports).

The meal went ahead as planned, except for the omission of the fillet of sole as a mark of respect. The menu was as follows:

Anchovies Sevigne

Melon with Parma Ham

Lobster Quenelles With Shrimp Sauce Leg of Lamb

Vatel Duck Sauteed in Madeira Wine

Strawberry Bombe

Sadly Vatel was unable to maintain the serenity which was essential to the role

calmly, never was unable to maintain the serenity which was essential to the role of maître d'hôtel, according to his own description:

The master of the kitchens must be well bred, so that he may always make an appearance that will do honor to his master. He should be grave and dignified but at the same time pleasing, civil, amiable and well disposed. Over all, he must at all times give an appearance of serenity.

A LAS VEGAS FIFTIETH

1950 and 2000: Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

The Las Vegas Resort's fiftieth birthday was celebrated at a gala event attended by many famous celebrities, including Tony Curtis, Buddy Greco, Rich Little, Dick Van Patten, and Lanie Kazan. The menu for the five-course dinner was the same as on the opening night of April 24, 1950: "Louisiana Prawn Cocktail, French Onion Soup, Endive Salad, Baked Baby Lobster Thermidor & Filet Mignon, and Chocolate Malted Milk Cake."

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1843: Britain

An early version of modern baking powder was developed and manufactured by pharmacist Alfred Bird, of Bird's Custard Powder fame, and a short promotional piece about it appeared in the *Illustrated London News* on this day.

Mr Alfred Bird, chemist, Birmingham, communicated with the Duke of Newcastle, as head of the War Department, offering to supply the troops in the East with his baking and fermenting powder, which would admit of their being regularly supplied with fresh bread, as well as prove invaluable in the hospitals for the supply of the sick and wounded with bread, light cakes, light puddings, and other articles of food suited to their condition.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1806: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day William Clark wrote: “[W]e purchased 3 dogs which were pore, but the fattest we could precure, and cooked them with straw and dry willow.”

1861: Australia

William John Wills of the illfated Burke and Wills expedition wrote on this day: “As we [were] about to start this morning some blacks came by from whom we were fortunate enough to get about twelve pounds of fish for a few pieces of straps and some matches, &c. This is a great treat for us as well as a valuable addition to our rations.”

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1919: USA

Future president Harry Truman was newly arrived back in the United States after his war service in France. He wrote to his sweetheart and future wife, Bess Wallace, on this day:

Camp Mills,

Dear Bess

I have been in America just four days and I have been so busy just lookin’ at the place and getting some honest-to-goodness food under my belt that I haven’t had time to do anything else.

Every welfare organization in America met us and gave us something. . . . They took us off the boat at Pier No. 1 in Hoboken, fed us till we wouldn’t hold any more, put us on a ferry, and sent us to Camp Mills, where they gave us a bath and lots of new clothes, the first some of the men have had since they joined. Then we made a raid on the canteens and free shows. I’ll bet ten barrels wouldn’t hold the ice cream consumed that first evening.

My Dago barber [Frank Spina] gave me an Italian dinner at his sister’s

house last night—yards and yards of spaghetti, chicken and dumplings, rabbit and peas and all the trimmings. I nearly foundered myself. Hope to see you soon and make up for lost time.

APRIL 25

U.N. ANNIVERSARY DINNER

1946: New York, USA

A dinner was held at the Hotel Astor, New York, to celebrate the first anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. Seven hundred delegates to the Security Council, invited guests, and guest speaker film star Lana Turner sat down to a meal of turtle soup, nuts, olives, baked trout, broiled chicken, asparagus, and strawberry ice.

A note at the bottom of the menu read “This menu conforms with the President’s request to save wheat, fats, and oils.”

A newspaper report of the event commented that delegates from Europe may have read this with some cynicism, many nations still suffering severe and widespread shortages of many staple items at the time (and for years afterward).

ANNIVERSARIES

1549: England

Andrew Boorde, physician and one-time Carthusian monk, was in the Fleet prison and perhaps did not expect to live much longer when he signed his last will and testament on April 9. The will was probated on April 25, so it is presumed he died about this day.

Boorde was born around 1490 and wrote two very influential books on nutrition. His *Dyetary of Health* was published in 1542, and the *Breviary of Health* in 1547. He emphasized the importance of a balanced diet and recommended that a person chose food to suit his personality.

He had much to say about beer and ale. Of beer, which he called the “Dutch

doorish liquor," he said that it "is much used in England to the detriment of many Englishmen . . . for the drink, is a cold drink; yet it doth make a man fat and doth inflate the belly." Of ale, he said, "Ale must haue these propertyes: it must be fresshe and cleare, it must not be ropy nor smoky."

Of beer he writes, "If the bere be well serued, and be fyned, and not new, it doth gualyfy the heat of the lyuer." And on wine: "Chose your wyne after this sorte: it muste be fyne, fayre, and clere to the eye."

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

After establishing our camp, and making the necessary preparations, we killed one of our little steers, and found it in excellent condition. The graziers will judge by this simple fact, how well the country is adapted for pastoral pursuits; particularly when it is remembered that we were continually on the march, and had frequently to pass over very rocky ranges, which made our cattle footsore; and that the season was not the most favourable for the grass, which, although plentiful, was very dry. The steer gave us 120 lbs. of dried beef.

1861: Australia

From the notes and journals of members of the illfated Burke and Wills expedition to cross Australia from south to north in 1860–1861. On this day, Wills wrote:

We had scarcely finished breakfast when our friends the blacks, from whom we obtained the fish, made their appearance with a few more, and seemed inclined to go with us and keep up the supply. We gave them some sugar, with which they were greatly pleased, they are by far the most well-behaved blacks we have seen on Cooper's Creek.

APRIL 26

THE SPANISH DINNER

1808: London, England

An event which came to be known as the “Spanish Dinner” was held on this day at the Albion. The dinner was held “in celebration of the late glorious re-establishment of the Constitution in Spain,” and the 150 guests were “chiefly merchants connected with Spain.”

Details of the complete bill of fare are absent, but the newspapers next day reported that the tables were spread with a profusion of every delicacy the season affords, as well as choice wines. The entremets were very theatrical, in the best medieval style.

The dinner . . . was of the best description: on the top table was a fountain surrounded with pastry, which threw the water a yard high; also windmill going round, castles, monasteries, cottages, &c, some with music, others bells, all playing and ringing; likewise cakes ornamented as ships, with the Spanish colours, with “Liberty” on them; jellies, blancmanges, creamd &c., all decorated in the most tasty manner as fruit, flowers, &c.

The dinner is also used as a yardstick for the use of turtle meat. It is difficult to imagine today the sheer scale of turtle imports to Britain to provide for the taste and fashion for turtle soup in particular. It would have been unthinkable from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries to hold an important dinner without offering turtle soup. Turtles were shipped in specially rigged vessels in huge on-deck tanks from the Caribbean, and several species were almost made extinct on account of the trade. It was said that “[t]he usual allowance at what is called a Turtle-Dinner, is 6 lb. live weight per head. At the Spanish-Dinner, at the City of London Tavern, in 1808, four hundred guests attended [this appears to be incorrect], and 2500lb. of turtle were consumed.”

A CHEESE BEQUEST

1531: England

In the past it was not uncommon for sufficiently well-off persons to leave a bequest to the local parish to provide for the poor. Often this was distributed in the form of bread, but one Richard Cronsby made a different request in his

THE FORM OF BREAD, BUT ONE RICHARD CRONSHAW MADE A DIFFERENT REQUEST IN HIS will, signed on this day.

The parish of St. Bartholomew by the Royal Exchange, London.

Several benefactors having given bread to the poor of this parish, Richard Cronshaw, goldsmith, by will, 26 April 1531, directed that £100. Should be paid to provide 2s. weekly for ever, to be laid out in good cheese, to be delivered to the poor of the parish, according as they received the bread which then was and had been long given to them. The sum of £100 was received by the parish cheesemonger, who distributes monthly butter or cheese of the same value to eight poor women who are the oldest out-pensioners of the parish.

AN ODE TO A HALIBUT

1784: England

The poet William Cowper, who was known to be very fond of fish, wrote the following ode in a letter to his friend Rev. Morley Unwin:

To The Immortal Memory of the Halibut,

On Which I Dined This Day, Monday, April 26, 1784.

WHERE hast thou floated, in what seas pursued
Thy pastime? when wast thou an egg new-spawn'd,
Lost in th' immensity of ocean's waste?
Roar as they might, the overbearing winds
That rock'd the deep, thy cradle, thou wast safe—
And in thy minikin and embryo state,
Attach'd to the firm leaf of some salt weed,
Didst outlive tempests, such as wrung and rack'd

The joints of many a stout and gallant bark,
And whelm'd them in the unexplor'd abyss.
Indebted to no magnet and no chart,
Nor under guidance of the polar fire,
Thou wast a voyager on many coasts,
Grazing at large in meadows submarine,
Where flat Batavia just emerging peeps
Above the brine,—where Caledonia's rocks
Beat back the surge,—and where Hibernia shoots
Her wondrous causeway far into the main.
—Wherever thou hast fed, thou little thought'st,
And I not more, that I should feed on thee.
Peace therefore, and good health, and much good fish,
To him who sent thee! and success, as oft
As it descends into the billowy gulph,
To the same drag that caught thee!—Fare thee well!
Thy lot thy brethern of the slimy fin
Would envy, could they know that thou wast doom'd
To feed a bard, and to be prais'd in verse.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1949: Hotel Washington, USA

A Public Welfare Medal was awarded to George Harrison Schull at the annual dinner of the National Academy of Sciences on this day in recognition of “his services in the application of principles of the pure line and of hybrid vigor to the improvement of the quantity and quality of the maize crop.”

As a result of Schull’s work, corn yields were increased up to 50 percent, and the seed could also be grown in a wider variety of soil and climate conditions.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769: Tahiti

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks:

“*Georges Land*” Plenty of trade this morn indeed we have always had enough of bread fruit and cocoa nuts, refreshments maybe more necessary for the people than pork tho they certainly do not like them so well. Our freinds as usual at the tents today but do nothing worthy record

1806: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day, John Ordway wrote: “[D]ined on a little dry Elk meat as we have nothing else.”

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1662: Southampton, England



Detail of sage bud

Samuel Pepys observed an old custom of planting graves with sage, and later in the day had sturgeon which had been caught locally (a very rare event) for dinner.

Sir George and I, and his clerk Mr. Stephens, and Mr. Holt our guide, over to Gosport; and so rode to Southampton. In our way, besides my Lord Southampton's parks and lands, which in one view we could see L6,000 per annum, we observed a little church-yard, where the graves are accustomed to be all sowed with sage. . . . At Southampton we went to the Mayor's and there dined, and had sturgeon of their own catching the last week, which do not happen in twenty years, and it was well ordered. They brought us also some caveare, which I attempted to order, but all to no purpose, for they had neither given it salt enough, nor are the seedes of the roe broke, but are all in berryes.

1681: London, England

From the diary of John Evelyn: “I dined at Don Pietro Ronquillo’s, the Spanish Ambassador, at Wild House, who used me with extraordinary civility. The dinner was plentiful, half after the Spanish, half after the English way.”

1942: Germany

Joseph Goebbels described Hitler as a committed vegetarian in his diary entry for this day:

An extended chapter of our talk was devoted by the Führer to the vegetarian question. He believes more than ever that meat-eating is harmful to humanity. Of course he knows that during the war we cannot completely upset our food system. After the war, however, he intends to tackle this problem also. Maybe he is right. Certainly the arguments that he adduces in favor of his standpoint are very compelling.

The fact or otherwise of Hitler’s vegetarianism remains disputed by historians. Some claim it was a fiction invented and fostered by Goebbels to reinforce the image of Hitler’s self-control and dedication.

APRIL 27

ROYAL SOCIETY DINNER

1749: London, England

Only three members attended the meeting of the Royal Society on this night, other members preferring to attend a fireworks display to celebrate the Peace of Aix la Chapelle. The bill of fare for the society dinner at this meeting was reduced, in the expectation that there would be few members present, and the trio sat down to a very modest meal indeed:

Fresh Salmon and Soal

SirLoin of Beef, roast and pickles

Asparagus

FOOD BUSINESS

1979: Burlington, Vermont, USA

The local Ben and Jerry's Scoop Shop offered free cones to their customers as a thank you for their support during the first year of business. It has since become an annual event as the company has grown and become an international business.

1999: Britain

The Unilever Company announced on this day that it would no longer use GM foods in any of its products. Unilever at the time sold over 1,000 brands of foods via subsidiary companies in 88 countries. The decision was taken in response to a rapidly increasing rate of public concern about the potential dangers of genetic engineering.

The following day, the Swiss company Nestlé—the world's largest food production company—announced that it would also ban GM foods.

The announcements were seen as a great victory by environmental organizations such as Greenpeace.

FOOD & WAR

1943: Amsterdam, Holland, World War II

From the diary of Anne Frank:

Our food is miserable, Dry bread and coffee substitute for breakfast. Dinner: spinach or lettuce for a fortnight on end. Potatoes twenty centimetres long and tasting sweet and rotten. Whoever wants to follow a slimming diet should stay in the "Secret Annexe."

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769: Tahiti

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks: “‘*Georges Land*’ . . . Lycurgus and a freind [*sic*] of his (who eats most monstrously) dind with us, we christend him Epicurus.”

1806: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day, Meriwether Lewis wrote: “[T]his Cheif by name Yellept haranged his village in our favour intreated them to furnish us with fuel and provision and set the example himself by bringing us an armfull of wood and a platter of 3 roasted mullets . . . we purchased four dogs.”

JOURNALS AND LETTERS

1904: Paris, France

From the journal of English writer Arnold Bennett (1867–1931):

Yesterday when I was in Paillard’s it occurred to me that the difference between the most excessively chic restaurant and an ordinary good one is very slight. Paillard’s has the reputation of being the best, or one of the three best in Paris, and therefore in the world. Yet it is small, and not in the least luxurious, and the waiting is no better than it is elsewhere. The monde has no special appearance of smartness. The food was very good, and so was the wine. But scarcely appreciably better than at Sylvains, Maire’s or Noel and Peters. And the prices were about 25 per cent dearer than at those other places—not more. In the evening, at Boulant, I had for 6d. a bifteck and soufflé potatoes better than which could not be obtained anywhere, at no matter what price. When you have thoroughly good, well-flavoured, tender meat, perfectly cooked—you cannot surpass that.

APRIL 28

DINNER IN ALASKA

1904: Alaska Territory

The first recorded attempt to climb Mount McKinley was by Alaskan judge

The first recorded attempt to climb Mount McKinley was by Alaskan judge James Wickersham in 1903. His attempt was unsuccessful (it was not scaled until 1913), but the trip was not wasted. He returned a hero, not least because he had struck four gold claims en route and as a result precipitated a gold rush to Alaska.

Wickersham became a popular speaker at dinners, and on April 28, 1904, he gave a dinner to members of the bar at the Tokio restaurant in Fairbanks. The menu card—made on birch bark—is a story of Alaska in itself.

HIYU MUCK-AMUCK

Hooch—Chena Cocktails.

Consomme, a la Tawtilla.

Olives.

Chicken Mayonaise, Oyster Paties.

Sauterne.

Wine Jelly, Cream Sauce.

ROAST MOOSE, PROSPECTOR STYLE.

Mashed Potatoes, Green Peas.

Ice Cream—Yuma Canned.

Jelly Cake.

Nuts, Raisins, Cheese, Coffee,

Cigars.

Some of the menu items, such as the roast moose, speak for themselves, but others need some explanation. *Hiyu Muck-Amuck* references something like “plenty to eat.” *Hooch* is a general term for alcohol, adapted by Alaskan miners during the Klondike gold rush of 1898 from the name of a native tribe who were apparently skilled at distilling it. *Chena* was, according to Wickersham, “the last

outpost of civilisation” on their chosen route. *Tawtilla* remains a mystery to this writer, at present, as does the significance of *Yuma* (presumably indicating the city in Arizona)—but no doubt the significance and humor were well understood by the guests at the dinner.

THE MUTINY ON THE BOUNTY

1789: At Sea

The infamous mutiny on the *Bounty* took place on this day when Master’s Mate Fletcher Christian, aided by other crew members, seized control of the vessel and cast Captain William Bligh and eighteen of his loyal supporters adrift on the open sea. Foodstuffs of one sort or another played a large part in the original voyage, the reasons for the mutiny, and of course the amazing survival story of the men in the open boat.

Bligh summarized the events leading up to the mutiny in his later report:

At present, for the better understanding the following pages, it is sufficient to inform the reader, that in August, 1787, I was appointed to command the *Bounty*, a ship of 215 tons burthen, carrying 4 six-pounders, 4 swivels, and 46 men, including myself and every person on board. We sailed from England in December, 1787, and arrived at Otaheite the 26th of October, 1788. On the 4th of April, 1789, we left Otaheite, with every favourable appearance of completing the object of the voyage, in a manner equal to my most sanguine expectations.

The purpose of the voyage was to acquire breadfruit trees for use in the English colonies. The five-month stay in Tahiti was due to the necessity of getting the seedlings sourced there established before the long voyage home. Many of the sailors took to the lifestyle on the island paradise with great enthusiasm, as Bligh noted in his report of the incident:

It will very naturally be asked, what could be the reason for such a revolt? in answer to which, I can only conjecture that the mutineers had assured themselves of a more happy life among the Otaheiteans, than they could possibly have in England; which, joined to some female connections, have most probably been the principal cause of the whole transaction.

Eighteen men went into the open 23-foot (7 meter) launch with Bligh, who then navigated to Timor, with only the aid of a quadrant and pocket watch. The voyage of 3,618 nautical miles (6,710 kilometers) took forty-seven days, and five men died en route. The very meager rations were supplemented by small amounts of food and water they were able to acquire en route. Bligh eventually got back to England, and ultimately many of the mutineers were found and felt the full impact of the law, some being hanged. Bligh noted their provisions when they set off:

A few pieces of pork were then thrown to us, and some cloaths, also the cutlasses . . . we were at length cast adrift in the open ocean. . . . The quantity of provisions I found in the boat was 150 lb. of bread [hardtack], 16 pieces of pork, each piece weighing 2 lb. 6 quarts of rum, 6 bottles of wine, with 28 gallons of water, and four empty barrecoes.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769: Tahiti

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks:

“*Georges Land*” . . . The men who visited us constantly eat with us of our provisions, but the women never had been prevailed on to taste a morsel; today however they retired sometime after dinner into the servants apartment and eat there a large quantity of plantains, tho they could not be persuaded to eat with us, a mystery we find it very difficult to account for.

FOOD & WAR

1942: Britain, World War II

From the wartime diary of British housewife Nella Last: “The present rationing has been a farce. . . . Much as I dislike coupons and chits, I think it’s the only fair way to stop overlapping and grabbing. Eggs are another muddle, for people register with an egg and butter dealer, but get eggs with their grocery list, too!”

The *Times*, on the same day as Nella’s diary entry, had a short announcement about the egg supply:

April Egg Ration

The Ministry of Food announced last week that the allowance of eggs during April had been raised from three to four. The supply of eggs has improved, and it was stated yesterday that while the number allowed for each person will remain at four, in some areas it will be possible to supply five.

The same edition of the *Times* carried a story about an offense against rationing regulations by the chef of a London hotel.

Hotel Chef's Purchases of Horse Flesh

For buying 78 lb. of horse flesh at 1s. 8d. a lb. instead of the maximum price of 1s., the WALDORF HOTEL, LIMITED, Aldwych, was at Bow Street Police Court yesterday fined £40, and PIERRE LOUIS RUETTE, the hotel chef, was fined £60 and ordered to pay £15 15s. costs. LEONARD LIONEL LIONE, horse flesh purveyor, trading as the Continental Stores, London Road, Norbury, was fined £65, with £15 15s. costs, for selling and offering horse flesh for sale at excessive prices.

Mr. Claude Hornby, for the hotel, said the horseflesh was supplied over a period of nearly three months, and the hotel meat ration for the same period was 4,740lb. It was supplied without their knowledge, consent, or approbation, and the management viewed with consternation the fact that the chef had bought it. It was used to supplement the rations for some of the staff—foreigners who were not unused to horseflesh and did not mind it.

The *Manchester Guardian* of the same day had an interesting article about the retrieval of sugar from bomb sites:

Salvaging Blitzed Sugar

It may startle the fastidious to learn that most people will sooner or later have in their sugar rations some of the sugar that is now being salvaged from blitzed buildings. Great quantities of sugar are now being recovered from the basements of sheds in the London docks, sheds burned to the ground during the earlier raids on London. The Food Ministry describes this salvaging as “probably the stickiest job in the world,” a job on which fifty men are engaged—“prospecting for seams of sugar below ground.”

Heavy rains have formed pools of treacle down there which are being pumped out, good thick treacle containing up to 80 per cent of sugar. Some of the sugar recovered will be used to make industrial alcohol, but when the sugar which has remained virtually unharmed in the bags has been refined, it will be impossible to detect any difference in it from ordinary unscathed sugar.

Not only is sugar being salvaged. The Minister reports that nearly three-quarters of the food affected by German bombing up to the end of December 1941, has been salvaged.

APRIL 29

DINNER AT THE WHITE HOUSE

1962: Washington, DC, USA

President and Mrs. John F. Kennedy entertained dozens of world leaders and a number of Nobel laureates on this day. President Kennedy said, “I think this is the most extraordinary collection of talent, of human knowledge . . . ever gathered at the White House, with the possible exception of when Thomas Jefferson dined alone.”

The menu was written in French, as was still the practice at the time—apart from “Pommes Chipp,” which is neither French nor English. The dishes were elegant and classical, and the wines superb.

La Couronne de l'Élu
Victoria

Puligny Montrachet Combetter 1er cru
1959

Filet de boeuf Wellington

Pommes Chipp

Château Mouton Rothschild 1955

FONDS d'artichauts favorite

Endive Meunière

Bombe Caribienne

Petits-fours assortis

Piper Heidsieck 1955

DINNER AT THE FOLLIES

1927: London, England

The following is the supper menu for a show called the *Midnight Follies* at the Hotel Metropole:

Consomme au Marsala

Compote de Madrilène en Gelée

—

Oeufs poché Daumont

Oeuf à la Gelée d'Estragon

Oeuf sur la plat au Bacon

—

Filet de Sole Joinville

Homard froid Sauce Mayonnaise

Haddock poché Métropole

—

Poussin en Cocotte Ménagère

Caille de Vigne aux Raisins

Cuisse de Poulet grille Américaine

Rognons d'Agneau Vert Pré

Jambon Langue Roast Beef

—

Salade de Volaille

Coeur de Laitues Fines Herbes

Sandwiches Variés

—

Biscuit Glacé Cote d'Azur

Coupe Cressane Friandises

—

Welsh Rarebit Canapé Rabelais

Toast au Anchois

RESTAURANTS & HOTELS

1851: London, England

Restaurants specializing in a specific national cuisine were very uncommon in the mid-nineteenth century, and no doubt the new premises advertised on this day in the *Daily News* offered an alternative to their clubs for the men about town.

Will be OPENED MONDAY, the 5th of May, PURSELL'S

RESTAURANT FRANCAIS et ITALIEN, 20, Ludgate-hill, St. Pauls,—
Dinner in the restaurant, fish, soup, joint, pastry, cheese, and vegetables, for
2s.; with poultry, 2s. 6d. Tea, 1s. 6d.; coffee, 1s. 6d. Dinner in the coffee
room; a plate of meat, vegetables and bread, 1s. Coffee 3d.; Tea, 4d.;
chocolate, 6d. per cup. A large chess, coffee, and smoking saloon. At JOHN
R. PURSELL'S, 20 Ludgate-hill, St. Paul's. Dinners, routs and ball suppers
sent out.

PRESSED DUCK

2003: Paris, France

The Tour d'Argent has been part of the Paris dining scene since the sixteenth century. In the late nineteenth century the restaurant developed a signature dish called pressed duck. In 1890, they began numbering the dishes, each diner being presented with a card bearing the number of the serving of duck. Former U.S. president Theodore Roosevelt ate duck No. 33,642 in 1910 and Charlie Chaplin No. 253,652 in 1955. On April 29, 2003, the one millionth serving of pressed duck made it to the tables.

Pressed duck is a theatrical dish, with the final stages of its preparation taking place table-side. The ducks are reared on the marshes around Challans. At six weeks of age they are strangled. Aficionados say this is the secret—that strangling retains all of the blood and keeps the flesh succulent. They are eaten within 24 hours. At the restaurant, the ducks are lightly roasted, and the breast, leg, and liver removed. The next stage takes place at the table. The carcass is placed in a press, and the blood and juice squeezed out into a chafing dish. This juice is mixed with the chopped liver, butter, and Cognac and quickly cooked. The resulting sauce is poured over the breast. The legs are grilled and served with salad as a separate dish.

IN THE AIR

1928: Berlin–Paris

The first full in-flight hot food service was provided by Lufthansa on this day aboard their “Flying Dining Car” on their Berlin–Paris route. The Junkers G-31 planes carried fifteen passengers, and they were served by a steward from a fully

equipped galley. Passenger comfort was becoming a priority by this time; Lufthansa also made trials of in-flight films on these trips.

FOOD & WAR

1945: Holland, World War II

A week before the formal surrender of Germany, the first food packages were dropped by Allied planes into Holland. Food supplies were virtually exhausted due to the prolonged occupation by the Nazis, and the Dutch were starving. Many had had to resort to eating their tulip bulbs and pets.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1841: Australia

From the journal of Edward John Eyre (1815–1901) on an expedition into the inland of central Australia:

Three days had passed away since we left the last water, and it was very doubtful when we might find any more. Six hundred miles of country had to be traversed, before I could hope to obtain the slightest aid or assistance of any kind, whilst I knew not that a single drop of water or an ounce of flour had been left by these murderers, from a stock that had previously been so small.

1861: Australia

From the notebooks and journals of the illfated Burke and Wills expedition. The previous day one of the camels, called Landa, which were used as pack animals, became bogged beside a creek. It proved impossible to extricate him, so the pragmatic option was taken next morning: “Finding Landa still in the hole, we made a few attempts at extricating him, and then shot him, and after breakfast commenced cutting off what flesh we could get at for jerking.”

They remained at the same camp the next day “for the purposes of drying the meat, for which process the weather is not very favourable.”

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1793: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde:

Dinner to day Neck of Veal roasted &c. Mrs. Andrews (Stephen Andrew's Wife) who has been ill some time, and little or no Appetite was saying to Mrs. Hardy a little time ago, that she should relish she believed a bit of rost Veal from my House if sent unexpectedly, therefore I sent her a Bone of Veal today with which she was much pleased and ate hearty of it.

APRIL 30

BUFFALO BUTTER

1676: Syria

From the diary of Henry Teonge, chaplain aboard HMS *Assistance*, *Bristol*, and *Royal Oak*, from 1675 to 1679. They had arrived in Scanderoon on April 9 and on this day were en route to Aleppo across the plains of Antioch.

Having rode a long way in this plain, we come at the last to a small village, the worst that I ever saw. . . . 'Tis inhabited by Arabeans, whoe have abundance of these buffeloes, and some few cows, hogs, some sheepe, and abundance of hens. Heare very neare to the houses are abundance of buffeloe-calves, every one of them tyd (like so many beares) to a stake, where I suppose they give them milke. The people were many of them milking these cattell when the Captaine, and our janizary came thither, . . . And many foule women were makeing of butter of the buffaloes milke, which they put into a calf's skin, or hogg's skin, and so doe rowle it, and kneade it on the ground till it be a substance, more like greace than butter boath for looks and taste; for the cheife lady of the towne (as I suppose by her habite) presented us with som of it, and a little of that would goe far.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1855: Britain

An early patent for a refrigeration method was granted to Edward Acres. His patent specifications outlined the process:

Atmospheric air is proposed to be desiccated and cooled for the purpose of preserving and drying grain in air-tight reservoirs, by first withdrawing the moisture by causing it in a heated state to pass into a vessel in which are a number of pipes, the temperature of which is kept low by the constant circulation through them. The heated air, by coming in contact with the cold surfaces of the pipes and the interior of the vessel, deposits its moisture by the condensation of its vapours. The air, thus cooled and desiccated, is to be drawn through the reservoir in which the grain is placed, by means of an exhauster.

1841: USA

Orlando Jones of England received U.S. Patent No. 2,000 for his “Improvement in the Manufacture of Starch.” He had received an English patent on it twelve months earlier.

What I claim as my invention is, first, the mode of treating or operating on farinaceous matters to obtain starch and other products, especially flour or powder produced from rice, and in the manufacture of starch, by submitting farinaceous matters to a process or processes of caustic alkaline treatment, as herein described; and secondly I claim the mode of manufacturing starch from rice by the process or processes herein described.

IN THE AIR

1927: Britain

Imperial Airways began its luxury Silver Wing service between London and Paris on this day. The three-engine Argosy aircraft were newly decorated and carried twenty passengers at a cost of £6 6s one way or £11 11s return. A steward served a light luncheon and “a varied choice of liquid refreshments” from a buffet during the flight.

There was an unexpected advantage to the airline in providing such an innovative beverage service. The *Times* reported that

In this regard a curious situation has arisen. Imperial Airways applied for the usual licence granted to railways for restaurant cars, only to be informed that the Excise regulations made no provision for the licensing of any aircraft. Accordingly Imperial Airways are apparently entitled to sell alcoholic refreshments without the formality of a licence.

FOOD & WAR

1946: Alcatraz, California, USA, Post–World War II

The director of the prison wrote a letter to the warden on this day in respect of the post-war call to voluntary rationing:

In prison there are patriots as generous as any of those on the outside. The prison community has reason to be proud of its record with blood donors, bond subscriptions, and other efforts in furthering the war. Now the fighting is over, and the whole country is called upon to feed the hungry children and starving people of Europe and Asia. Already prisoners are stepping into line to take their share of the responsibilities, and the newspapers report voluntary assistance offered by the prison communities scattered throughout the country.

We know that the Federal Prison System will do its part in this campaign, but the need is so urgent that we feel that an organized effort should be made to take full advantage of every opportunity. The shortage of food supplies is acute, and what help we are able to give must be made available now. That is the reason we are enclosing a memorandum suggesting some ideas for your consideration.

It is not considered either desirable or effective to impose any restrictive diet by administrative order. What we should like to accomplish is to give both prisoners and officers alike an opportunity to voluntarily do their part in the conservation of food. A much healthier atmosphere will be possible if each one has an opportunity to do his part on a voluntary basis. The Administrator can do much in furthering this effort if he makes it interesting, informative, and keeps everyone advised with respect to the

progress made in reaching the goal set by the institution.

HOW TO PRESERVE EGGS

1879: USA

New York Weekly Tribune gave a recipe for preserving eggs—a very important process in the days before refrigeration.

Preserving Eggs

The following method for preserving eggs has been used with success, and eggs thus packed have been taken out good at the end of two years. Take air-slaked lime, and mix water with it till it is of the consistency of Indian pudding to the stirabout. Put a layer of this in the bottom of a tight vessel, and set the eggs up, small end down far, enough apart that each egg may be encased in the lime. Or, “Make the water strong enough with lime to bear the eggs, and to each four gallons of water put in one pound of bicarbonate of soda, stir up well and keep the eggs covered with boards and weight.”

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1806: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day, Meriwether Lewis wrote: “[W]e purchased . . . several dogs . . . these people (Wollahwollahs) will not eat the dog but feast heartily on the otter which is vastly inferior in my estimation.”

1841: Australia

From the journal of Edward John Eyre (1815–1901) on an expedition into the inland of central Australia:

Among the principal things carried off by the natives, were, the whole of our baked bread, amounting to twenty pounds weight, some mutton, tea and sugar, the overseer’s tobacco and pipes, a one gallon keg full of water, some clothes, two double-barrelled guns, some ammunition, and a few other small articles

OTHER SMALL ARTICLES.

There were still left forty pounds of flour, a little tea and sugar, and four gallons of water, besides the arms and ammunition I had secured last night.

From the state of our horses, and the dreadful circumstances we were placed in, I was now obliged to abandon everything but the bare necessities of life.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1885: Nuenen, Netherlands

Vincent van Gogh wrote to his brother Theo about his new painting *The Potato Eaters*: “I have tried to emphasize that those people, eating their potatoes in the lamp-light have dug the earth with those very hands they put in the dish, and so it speaks of manual labour, and how they have honestly earned their food.”



Van Gogh painting of *The Potato Eaters* for April 30

(© Corbis)

May

MAY 1

May Day and Beltane

This first of May is usually celebrated as the first day of spring in the Northern Hemisphere. Many of the traditions of the day are very ancient, and have their origins in pagan and early Christian beliefs.

In Germany, *Maiebowle*, or Woodruff wine is the traditional beverage. Woodruff (*Galium odoratum*) is a perennial plant widespread in Europe. It is sweet smelling, even when the plant is dried. The sweet smell is attributable to coumarin, which is toxic in very high doses.

Woodruff Wine

Always drunk in Germany on May Day

Put a pint of white wine and two of red into a jug with sufficient sugar to sweeten it. Cut an orange, without peeling it, into thick slices and add it to the wine: then throw in some bunches of woodruff well washed and drained. Cover the jug and leave till next day.

—*Gentle Art of Cookery* (1926) by Leyer and Hartley

The ancient Gaelic pagan celebration which took place on May 1 is called Beltane (or Beltaine).

Thomas Pennant, in *A Tour in Scotland* (1772) described one of the Beltane rituals:

On the 1st of May, the herdsmen of every village hold their Beltein, a rural sacrifice: they cut a square trench on the ground, leaving the turf in the middle; on that they make a fire of wood, on which they dress a large caudle of eggs, butter, oatmeal and milk; and bring, besides the ingredients of the caudle, plenty of beer and whisky; for each of the company must

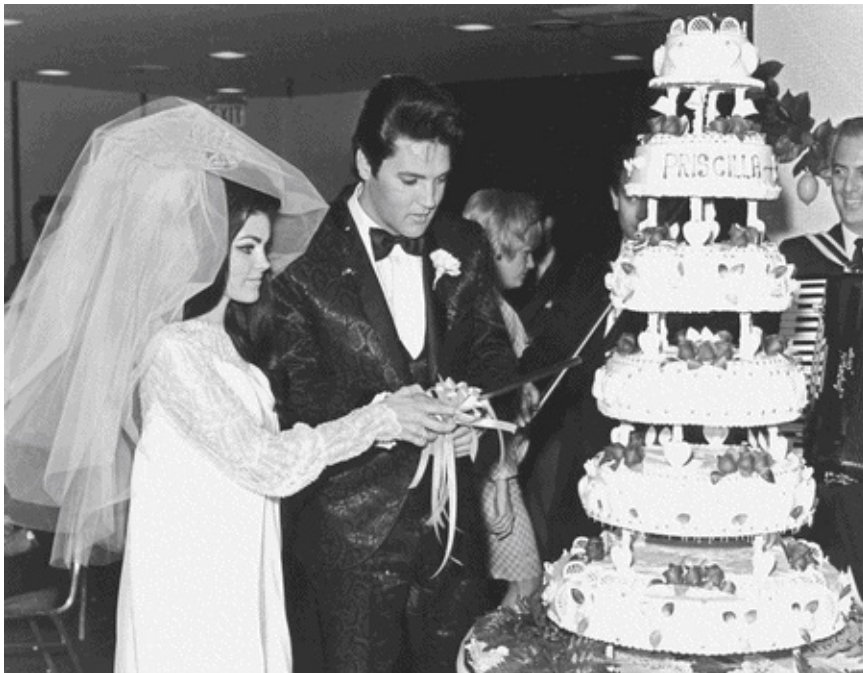
contribute something. The rites begin with spilling some of the caudle on the ground, by way of libation: on that, everyone takes a cake of oatmeal, upon which are raised nine square knobs, each dedicated to some particular being, the supposed preserver of their flocks and herds, or to some particular animal, the real destroyer of them: each person then turns his face to the fire, breaks off a knob, and flinging it over his shoulders, says, *This I give to Thee, preserve thou my horses; this to thee, preserve thou my sheep;* and so on. After that, they use the same ceremony to the noxious animals: *This I give to thee, O Fox! spare thou my lambs; this to thee, O hooded Crow! This to thee, O Eagle!*

When the ceremony is over they dine on the caudle; and after the feast is finished, what is left is hid by two persons deputed for that purpose; but on the next Sunday they re-assemble, and finish the reliques of the first entertainment.

Caudle: See August 21

ELVIS PRESLEY'S WEDDING

1967: Las Vegas



Newly married Elvis Presley and Priscilla Wagner cutting the cake.

(AP Photo/Las Vegas News Bureau)

A dinner for one hundred guests was served following the eight-minute ceremony when Elvis Presley married Priscilla Wagner. The menu comprised ham, eggs, Southern fried chicken, Oysters Rockefeller, roast suckling pig, poached and candied salmon, lobster, Eggs Minnette, and champagne.

The wedding cake was baked by the Aladdin Hotel staff. It was a sixtier angel cake covered in pink hearts, and apparently included “Sweettex” and dried milk amongst its ingredients.

ROYAL HOUSEHOLD ORDINANCES

1627: England

On this day during the reign of King Charles I and his queen, Henrietta Maria, certain ordinances and regulations for the government of the queen’s household were set down. The orders describe the oaths and duties of the officers and servants of the queen in the guard-chamber; the presence-chamber; the withdrawing-chamber; the bedchamber; and the privy-closet.

Some of the regulations pertaining to food and dining were as follows:

And our pleasure is, that when the Queene eateth privately, that is to say, in the withdrawing chamber, cabinet, or bedchamber, none are admitted to attend or bee present but the ladyes and gentlewomen that are sworne in those chambers, and then the meate [i.e., food generally] be carried by the back stayres, as it was in the Queene our mother’s tyme.

And because it is dishonourable that the Presence Chamber, where the state and honour of the Queene ought to be kept, be left empty; our pleasure is that those gentlemen that doe attend the Queene, viz cupbearers, carvers, sewers [servers,] gentlemen ushers, quarter waiters, and sewers [servers] of the chamber, give their attendance in that chamber some reasonable time both before and after dynner, or at least one of eah place, that soe the chamber may not bee unfurnished.

For the Waiters Chambers. Persons allowed to eat there

FOR THE WAITERS CHAMBERS, PERSONS ALLOWED TO EAT WERE . . .

- That no meate [food] bee given away.
- That the pages doe see that noe meate be imbeasled [embezzled,] neither in the carrying downe, nor when it cometh into the chamber.
- That one of the pages stay in the chamber after the waiters have dined and supped, so see the reversion duly seved on the table for the servants that are there allowed, and to suffer noe other to stay in the chamber.

Sir Kenelme Digby (1601–1665) was an English courtier and friend of Queen Henrietta Maria. He makes a number of references to her in his book *The Closet of the Eminently Learned Sir Kenelme Digby, Opened* (1669) and includes some of her favorite recipes and remedies.

Portugal Broth, as It Was Made for the Queen

Make very good broth with some lean of Veal, Beef and Mutton, and with a brawny Hen or young Cock. After it is scummed, put in an Onion quartered (and, if you like it, a Clove of Garlick), a little Parsley, a sprig of Thyme, as much Minth, a little balm; some Coriander-seeds bruised, and a very little Saffron; a little Salt, Pepper and a Clove. When all the substance is boiled out of the meat, and the broth very good, you may drink it so, or, pour a little of it upon tosted sliced-bread, and stew it, till the bread have drunk up all that broth, then add a little more, and stew; so adding by little and little, that the bread may imbibe it and swell: whereas if you drown it at once, the bread will not swell, and grow like gelly: and thus you will have a good potage. You may add Parsley-roots or Leeks, Cabbage or Endive in the due time before the broth is ended boiling, and time enough for them to become tender. In the Summer you may put in Lettice, Sorrel, Purslane, Borage and Bugloss, or what other pot-herbs you like. But green herbs do rob the strength and vigor and Cream of the Potage.

The Queen's ordinary *Bouillon de santé* in a morning was thus. A Hen, a handful of Parsley, a sprig of Thyme, three of Spear-minth, a little balm, half a great Onion, a little Pepper and Salt, and a Clove, as much water as would cover the Hen; and this boiled to less then a pint, for one good Porrenger full.

THE GREAT EXHIBITION

1851: London, England

The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, more commonly known simply as the Great Exhibition, was the project of Prince Albert, the consort of Queen Victoria. It began on this day at the specially built Crystal Palace in Hyde Park, and ran until October 31. The intention was to demonstrate to the world Britain's superiority in technology and industry, and to be an optimistic pointer to the future after several decades of political, economic, and social hardship.

The exhibition was not primarily about food, although a huge amount of produce and agricultural and industrial equipment from around the world was showcased, and a great deal of food was consumed at the various refreshment points. Perhaps the most interesting culinary event of the time was not, however, an intrinsic part of the Great Exhibition itself, but a huge venture organized by the flamboyant chef Alexis Soyer.

Soyer opened a restaurant at Gore House in Kensington close to the Great Exhibition, intending to cater for its visitors. He called it his "Symposium of All Nations" or "Universal Symposium." Not one to be humble about his projects, Soyer also referred to it in his advertisements as the "Vatican of Gastronomy," and his "Alternative Great Exhibition."

Customers could pay to enter the grounds only, or they could buy a single meal (more expensive in the house than on the grounds). Season tickets were also available; a single ticket was one guinea; double, one guinea and a half; and a family ticket admitting five, three guineas.

Soyer's mission was to "devote this establishment entirely for the display of the gastronomic."

There was a gastronomic experience to be had in every corner of the five acres of the grounds of Gore House, which became "The Encampment of All Nations." He proudly announced that visitors could have:

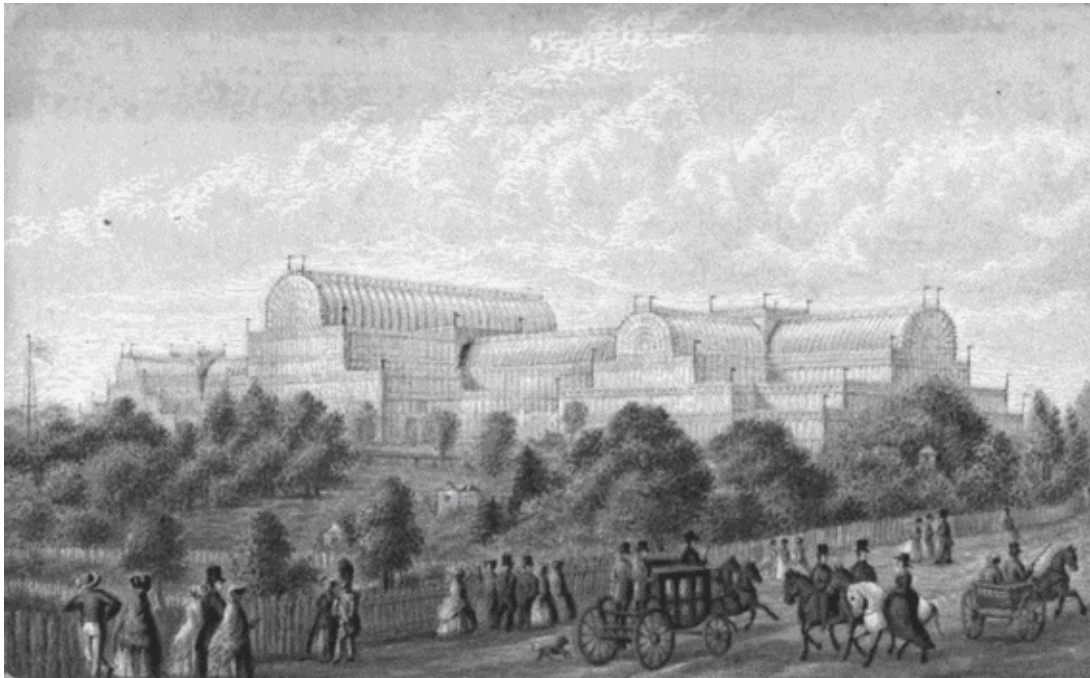
Dinner in the Temple of Danae, lunch in the vintage chamber, supper with the domains of the ice king, eating and drinking everywhere! Why the sight is enough to turn a heart of stone, enough to make a hermit relinquish his

is enough to turn a heart of stone, enough to make a hermit relinquish his roots and black bread, and a teetotaler break his pledge all to fragments.

Visitors could also find a meal at Les Pavillons des Zingari, or the Baronial Banqueting Hall, or Le Pavillon Monstre d'Amphytrion, which seated fifteen hundred diners at one time, and a number of other themed venues. If a more casual meal was wanted, they could partake of an ox roast on the green (one ox roasted every hour), or they could order drinks at the American bar.

One thing that they could not do was eat New Zealand style; Soyer apparently refusing to serve “baked young woman for two, or boiled missionary.”

Sadly, Soyer's venture was not a financial success. The symposium was forced to close after the exhibition, at a loss of £7,000.



Crystal Palace

FISH HOUSE PUNCH

1732: Philadelphia, America

The State in Schuylkill, known as the Fish House, was officially formed on this day, making the oldest private club in the United States. “Citizenship” is fixed at thirty members, and includes up to ten apprentices, a governor, three counselors, a treasurer, a secretary of state, a sheriff and a coroner, the latter’s role being “to hold an inquest upon any suspected meat, fish or other provisions.”

The club’s aim is to maintain the “the pleasant fiction” of the state’s political sovereignty, and it seems also the equally pleasant fiction that the members are keen and successful fishermen. The club meets thirteen times a year on “fishing days,” at which members prepare elegant meals.

The most important ritual at the dinners is the preparation of the punch. Members entrusted with this important role wear white aprons and straw boaters. Since 1812 it has been mixed in an especially commissioned nine-gallon Chinese porcelain bowl emblazoned with the club emblem of a perch.

The first mention of “Fish House punch” was in 1744, when it was described by a Virginia Commissioner who was “very kindly and welcomed . . . into their Province with a Bowl of fine Lemon Punch big enough to have Swimm’d half a dozen of young Geese.” The punch has achieved almost legendary status over the centuries, no doubt because its formula was kept a strict secret for most of that time. In spite of the secrecy however, there appears to be no doubt that the recipe has changed from time to time. In 1873, the instructions were written down by Dr. William Camac, then governor of the club, because most of the supposedly authentic recipes “are thoroughly undrinkable and do no service to the honor of the club that made this beverage famous.”

Fish House Punch

- 1 cup fresh lemon juice pressed from lemons with the rind removed
- 1 cup of cognac of the best quality (Salignac V.S. will do)
- 1 cup light rum
- 1 ¼ lb. fine sugar (essential)
- 4 ½ cups spring water or bottled water (NEVER, NEVER use Philadelphia tap water.)

Dissolve the sugar in two cups of spring water. Stir until clear. Strain the

Dissolve the sugar in two cups of spring water. Stir until clear. Strain the lemon juice and add it to the water, using as much of the remaining 2 ½ cups, or as little, as taste demands. Less water is necessary if the punch is served over crushed ice; more if served over ice cubes.

FOOD & WAR

1944: Netherlands, World War II

The *Tweede Distributiestamkaart*, or TD card (“Second Ration Card”) was issued on this day. The first ration card had been introduced in 1939, but this second one was linked with identity cards. Jews who had gone into hiding were unable to obtain food coupons without a TD card, and it was believed that the attempts of Jews and members of the Resistance to get cards or food would make it easier to find them.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt’s journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

I shall here particularise the routine of one of our days, which will serve as an example of all the rest. I usually rise when I hear the merry laugh of the laughing-jackass (*Dacelo gigantea*), which, from its regularity, has not been unaptly named the settlers’ clock; a loud cooe then roused my companions,—Brown to make tea, Mr Calvert to season the stew with salt and marjoram, and myself and the others to wash, and to prepare our breakfast, which, for the party, consists of two pounds and a-half of meat, stewed over night; and to each a quart pot of tea. Mr Calvert then gives to each his portion.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1662: London, England

Samuel Pepys is impressed with a dish of asparagus made by Lord Carlington

himself:

Sir G. Carteret, Sir W. Pen, and myself, with our clerks, set out this morning from Portsmouth very early, and got by noon to Petersfield; several officers of the Yard accompanying us so far. Here we dined and were merry. At dinner comes my Lord Carlingford from London, going to Portsmouth: tells us that the Duchess of York is brought to bed of a girl, at which I find nobody pleased; and that Prince Rupert and the Duke of Buckingham are sworn of the Privy Councill. He himself made a dish with eggs of the butter of the Sparagus, which is very fine meat, which I will practise hereafter.

1831: New York, USA

Alexis de Toqueville wrote about his impressions of New York in a letter to his mother:

The absence of wine at our meals at first struck us as very disagreeable; and we still can't understand the multitude of things that they succeed in introducing into their stomachs here. You see, in addition to breakfast, dinner, and tea with which the Americans eat ham, they also eat a very copious supper, and often a gouter. That up to now is the only indisputable superiority that I grant them over us. But they see in themselves many others. These people seem to me stinking with national conceit; it pierces through all their courtesy.

May 2

A VICTORY DINNER

1944: Aboard Ship

The crew of the USS *Langley* had a "Victory Dinner" on this day. The menu proclaiming the Victory Dinner is hand-drawn, and suggests that it was the ordinary dinner for the day hurriedly declared to be in honor of a victory—but does not specify what that was (and there would have been no need, the navy men aboard presumably not being in any doubt). The sketches decorating the menu suggest significant damage to the Japanese on land and sea, and the

Langley was employed in attacking Japanese positions in the central Pacific and western New Guinea at this time, so perhaps they had had a particularly successful day.

Cream of Tomato Soup

(Soda Crackers)

Country Fried Steaks

Baked Potatoes Mashed Turnips

Fried Onions

Apple Pie ala Mode

Bread Butter

Coffee

Cigars Cigarettes

SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY KITCHEN GOODS

1605: England

A detailed inventory of the goods belonging to John Robinsone, a tenant of West Chevington, was signed on this day. The inventory gives a fine picture of the farm and household accoutrements of the time. Robinsone's estate was worth a total of £66 18s, and this was made up of various farm animals, pieces of farm equipment, crops in the ground and produce in the barn, some clothing and "other trifles" and a quantity of household and kitchen utensils.

The household items listed in the inventory were as follows:

2 almoneryes, a cawell, and a pressore, price 20s.; 2 caldrons, 4 potts, 4 pannes, price 46s. 8d.; 16 peace of putter, fyve candlestickes, and two salts, price 14s. 4d.; 1 potte and a kette, price 16s.; 6 cheastes and thre coffers, price 16s.; 7 tubes, 6 barrels, 2 skeales, pannes, mealles, and dishes, price 15s. 8d.; 2 beddes, 2 chayres, 2 formes, and a borde, price 5s. 6d.; 2 fyer

crokes, a payre of tongs, and a paire of pott clips, price 2s.; 2 axes, one eche, 2 wambles, and one iron howe, price 3s.; 5 lynen sheates, 3 code pillowes, and 2 towels, price 22s.; 4 coverlids, 4 plads, 3 blankets, 2 cods, 2 window cloathes, and 2 sakes, price 28s. 6d.

GOOD HOUSEKEEPING

1885: USA

The first edition of *Good Housekeeping* magazine went on sale on this day. One of the contributors was the well-known food and cookery-book writer Miss Maria Parloa. The article began thus:

GASTRONOMIC THOUGHTS AND SUGGESTIONS.

SUPPLEMENTED WITH VALUABLE TESTED RECIPES

[This series of papers is original in Good Housekeeping and is not printed elsewhere. It is the only series that Miss Parloa prepares especially for one publication, and has no connection with the excellent group of recipes, and carefully prepared bills of fare that she arranges for a syndicate of daily and weekly journals.]

Let it be remembered that, in the long run, a simple diet will bring better health and more happiness; yet let it also be remembered that a wise housekeeper will seek to lift herself from ruts in which she may unconsciously have fallen, and, by making a little change here and there, present such a variety of food as shall render the table attractive at every meal. . . . Ability to be a perfect housekeeper is not conferred on every woman, but it is possible to be a good one without sacrificing all other interests in life.

Recipes included in the first edition were for tomato soup, fried bread, boiled halibut, Matelote sauce, salt fish in cream, and lemon cream pie.

Lemon Cream Pie

For the filling for this pie there must be taken the juice of three and rind of

one lemon, a teaspoonful of butter, a tablespoonful and a half of cornstarch, a large cupful of water, a cupful of granulated sugar, four tablespoonfuls of powdered sugar, and four eggs, and the crust will require three large tablespoonfuls of flour, one large tablespoonful of butter, and some water. Make the crust by rubbing the butter into the flour, adding cold water enough to make a smooth, stiff paste, and then rolling very thin. Mix the corn starch with four tablespoonfuls from the cupful of water. Put the remainder of the water into a sauce-pan, with the lemon rind and juice and the granulated sugar, and heat to the boiling point; then stir the corn starch into the boiling mixture, and cook for two minutes. Stir the butter into the mixture, and set away to cool. When cool, add the yolks of the four eggs, well beaten. Pour the mixture into a large, deep plate that has been lined with paste, and bake in a moderate oven for thirty-five minutes. During the last quarter of an hour make a meringue by beating the whites of the eggs to a stiff, dry froth, and gradually healing the powdered sugar into this froth. At the end of the thirty-five minutes cover the pie with the meringue and bake, with the oven door open, ten minutes longer. By following this rule one gets a very large, deep pie. The materials are sufficient for making two pies, but these would, of course, be smaller and thinner. At serving-time, the dish should be as cold as possible.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1865: USA

James H. W. Huckins of Boston, Massachusetts was granted Patent No. 47,545 for his "Improved Tomato Soup." It is not possible to patent a recipe in this way nowadays. A simple list of ingredients is not patentable, although a particular method or style of instructions may be subject to intellectual property law.

Early prejudices about the tomato were waning by this time, and it was becoming increasingly popular and was especially suitable for canning. Mr Huckins gave the following instructions for his soup in his patent application:

Take a stock boiler twenty gallons. Put into it fifty pound of beef-shin to fourteen gallons of cold water. Boil it, partly uncovered, for fourteen hours. After the water has partly boiled away add a little hot water from time to time as it may require. After it has boiled the required time, take it from the fire and add to it one quart of cold water. Afterward let it stand for ten

minutes. Next, skim off all the fat and strain the liquor from the meat through a fine sieve and we shall have nearly seven gallons of the liquor. Should there be more than seven gallons of the liquor, boil it down to the required quantity, but should there be less, add the difference in hot water. This is called “stock.” Next, take one bushel and a half of tomatoes, put them into a boiler, mash them up a little, and let them boil in their own liquor for one hour and a half. Next, strain them through a fine sieve—fine enough to stop the seeds and the skins. All the rest of the tomato must go through the sieve, after which we shall have about six gallons of the tomato liquor. If more than six gallons, boil it down to such an amount. If less, add more tomato. Next, mix the stock and the prepared tomato together, and keep the mixture somewhat under a boiling temperature until wanted for further action. Next prepare the following vegetables: Peel and weigh one pound and a half of onions, the same amount of turnips, one pound and three-quarters of carrots, and one pound of beets. Chop them all together until quite fine. Next take a soup-boiler that will hold sixteen gallons. Put into it three and a half pounds of butter. Next, add the chopped vegetables. Put the boiler on a hot fire, and cook the vegetables well. Next add to them three and one quarter pounds of flour, and thoroughly mix the whole together while hot. Next, take the boiler from the fire and let it cool a little. Next, add one ounce of black pepper, one-half pound of fine salt, and three-quarters of a pound of brown sugar. Mix the whole well together, and add the mixture of beef stock and tomato. The composition must now be well stirred for about ten minutes, and afterward put on the fire and stirred until it may boil. Continue to let it boil, and skim it for about five minutes, after which strain it through a fine sieve, but do not press the vegetables through the sieve. The composition will then be ready for the table, or for being hermetically sealed in cans. The amount of the preparation (which I term “tomato soup”) so made will be about thirteen gallons. It is a composition containing preservative qualities, which will prevent it from decomposition for a great length of time.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1861: Australia

From the notes and journals of members of the ill-fated Burke and Wills expedition to cross Australia from south to north in 1860–1861:

Breakfasted by moonlight, and started at half-past six. Following down the left bank of the creek in a westerly direction, we came, at a distance of six miles, on a lot of natives, who were camped on the bed of a creek. They seemed to have just breakfasted, and were most liberal in the presentations of fish and cake. We could only return the compliment by some fish-hooks and sugar. . . . On our way back, Rajah [the remaining camel] showed signs of being done up. He had been trembling greatly all the morning. On this account his load was further lightened to the amount of a few pounds, by the doing away with the sugar, ginger, tea, cocoa, and two or three tin plates.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1711: England

Jonathan Swift, in his *Journal to Stella*, mentioned Chelsea Buns:

A fine day, but begins to grow a little warm; and that makes your little fat Presto sweat in the forehead. Pray, are not the fine buns sold here in our town; was it not Rrrrrrrrare Chelsea buns? I bought one to-day in my walk; it cost me a penny; it was stale, and I did not like it, as the man said, *etc.* Sir Andrew Fountaine and I dined at Mrs. Vanhomrigh's, and had a flask of my Florence, which lies in their cellar; and so I came home gravely, and saw nobody of consequence to-day.

Chelsea buns are buns made by spreading dried fruit, sugar, and spices onto the dough before rolling it up then slicing the log into individual rolls. They were a great favorite with the seventeenth-century aristocracy who purchased them from the famous Chelsea Bun House in Chelsea, London.

May 3

AN EXOTIC BANQUET

1884: Paris, France

A banquet was held at the Hotel Continental in Paris to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of the founding of the Acclimatisation Society.

One hundred and fifty guests sat down to an exotic banquet that was reported worldwide. The story run by the *Sydney Morning Herald* gives the bill of fare by way of the summary of the less-than-enthusiastic president of the society.

The French Acclimatisation Society has just given a grand banquet of heterogeneous dishes to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of its foundation. A few speeches were delivered during the dessert, the fare furnishing, naturally, the principal topic of the speakers. M. Bonley, President of the society, was more sarcastic than enthusiastic in his allusions to the novel viands introduced into France by the efforts of the society. He declared that, according to his impressions, the wapiti deer flesh is not comparable with ordinary beef, Chinese yak very poor eating, Australian cassowary not to be named with a Mans capon, peccary pig tasteless, venerated pheasants were too venerable to be succulent, and Tonkin pig by no means worth fetching so far. He acknowledged, however, to a tender feeling for California salmon, and declared that all true astronomers should bow to the virtues of curried moose-deer.

DERBY DAY BREAKFAST

1941: USA

The Pennsylvania Railroad ran a Kentucky Derby Day Special between Chicago and Louisville and return in early May of this year. This was the breakfast offered on the morning of May 3:

Derby Day Breakfast

CHOICE OF:

Grapefruit Stewed Prunes

Sliced Bananas Chilled Tomato Juice

~~

CHOICE OF:

Cereal (Hot or Drv) with Cream

~~

CHOICE OF:

Eggs: Boiled, Poached, Scrambled, or Fried.

Omelet a la Creole

Broiled Ham with Fried Eggs

~~

Toast Muffins

Preserves

~~

Tea Coffee Milk

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1699: Australia

William Dampier on his *Voyage to New Holland* was 234 miles west of Cape Salvadore. The seamen caught and ate several sharks on this day.

We cought 3 small sharks, each 6 foot 4 inches long; and they were very good food for us. The next day we caought three more sharks of the same size and we eat them also, esteeming them as good Fish boil'd and pres'd, and then stew'd with Vinegar and Pepper.

1769: Tahiti

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks:

“*Georges Land.*” Dr Solander and myself who have all along acted in the capacity of market men attended this morn but no kind of provisions were

brought. . . . About noon several fishing boats came abreast the tents, they however parted with very few fish. In the course of the whole day a small quantity of bread fruit was got chiefly in a present and 6 Cocoa nuts only were bought, a very disagreeable change this from our former situation; we have now no cocoa nuts and not $\frac{1}{4}$ enough of bread fruit for the people, who have scarce ever before failed to turn away the latter from the market and purchase of the other from 3 to 400 a day.

1770: Australia

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks:

“*Botany Bay*” [Sydney, Australia] The Captn and Dr Solander employd the day in going in the pinnace into various parts of the harbour. They saw fires at several places and people who all ran away at their approach with the greatest precipitation, leaving behind the shell fish which they were cooking; of this our gentlemen took the advantage, eating what they found and leaving beads ribbands &c in return. They found also several trees which bore fruit of the Jambosa kind, much in colour and shape resembling cherries; of these they eat plentifully and brought home also abundance, which we eat with much pleasure tho they had little to recommend them but a light acid.

1806: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day, Meriwether Lewis wrote:

[W]e came 28 Ms. today. [I]t rained hailed snowed and blowed with great violence the greater portion of the day. . . . [W]e divided the last of our dryed meat at dinner when it was consumed as well as the ballance of our dogs nearly we made but a scant supper and had not anything for tomorrow.

1837: USA

From missionary Narcissa Whitman’s journal of her journey in 1836 from New York, across the Rocky Mountains, to Oregon and beyond:

To supply our men and visitors we have killed and eaten ten wild horses

TO supply our men and visitors we have killed and eaten ten wild horses bought from the Indians. This will make you pity us, but you had better save your pity for more worthy subjects. I do not prefer it to other meat, but can eat it very well when we have nothing else.

FOOD & WAR

1942: Indonesia, World War II

From the war diaries of Australian Army surgeon, Lieutenant Colonel Edward “Weary” Dunlop, a prisoner of war of the Japanese in Bandung (Bandoeng), West Java, Indonesia:

Food remains the greatest worry. Personally I have lost 25 pounds since leaving the Middle East and was under weight then. Now 13 stone 8 lb. One great worry is that the D, who have plenty of rice, put up a damn bad show as to cooking it, and in any case, they are nearly all officers with local contracts, they do better than us. Revolting spectacle has been seen of our lads salvaging D scraps from the refuse bins. Interviewed deputation today as to the dishing out of food—all troops are watching this most minutely.

1944: Amsterdam, Holland, World War II

From the diary of Anne Frank:

Vegetables are still very difficult to obtain: we had rotten boiled lettuce this afternoon. Ordinary lettuce, spinach and boiled lettuce, there’s nothing else. With these we eat rotten potatoes, so it’s a delicious combination! . . . Why do some people have to starve, while there are surpluses rotting in other parts of the world! Ogh, why are people so crazy?

May 4

FOOD & WAR

1941: Britain, World War II

From the wartime diary of housewife Nella Last. She wrote on this day of the

experience of an air-raid the previous night:

I'll never forget my odd sensations, one a calm acceptance of "the end," the other a feeling of regret that I'd not opened a tin of fruit salad for tea—and now it was too late! . . . I'm so very frugal nowadays, and I look at a tin of fruit longingly sometimes, now that fruit is scarce—but I put it back on the shelf, for I think that we may need it more later. . . . I've worked and worked, clearing glass and broken china. . . . I've opened the tin of fruit salad, and put my best embroidered cloth on, and made an egg- whip instead of cream.

1942: USA, World War II

War Ration Book No. 1, known as the "Sugar Book" was issued to all American families and individuals on this day. Sugar was the first consumer commodity rationed in the United States. All sugar sales ended on April 27 and resumed on May 5. The individual allowance was one half pound per person per week (about half the normal rate of consumption) and commercial users were allocated about 70 percent of their normal consumption.

Rationing took several different forms during the war. *Uniform coupon rationing*, as with sugar, gave all individuals the same amount of the commodity. *Points rationing* was based on "equivalent amounts" of commodities within a group. Coupons were provided for points, which could be spent on any combination of items within the group, depending on preference and availability.



Sugar rationing preparation and ration book

(Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division [Reproduction number e.g., LC-USE6-D-010485])

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1847: Britain

Thomas Shipp Grimwade was granted Patent No. 11,703 for a method of preserving milk. His method “proposes to preserve milk for any length of time, by the simple admixture of pure water. To the mixture saltpetre is added; the whole being exposed to heat in vacuo, so as to evaporate and extract the aqueous particles.” The milk powder was then enclosed in bottles “from which the air has been previously exhausted” in which it could be stored until required for use.

Grimwade’s desiccated milk became very popular, and was widely used on expeditions, long voyages, and by the military. There was no shortage of testimonials for the product. Here is one from *Living Age* ten years later, on February 14, 1857:

A cow that should eat no food, and whose milk, nevertheless, should not cease to flow, would be invaluable to sailors, travellers, armies, and Londoners. All the advantages of such a cow are by an ingenious process now place within reach of the classes we have named. A bottle of dried milk is before us—milk in powder, which will keep in all climates, and for any length of time. We take a spoonful of it, mix it with a teaspoonful [surely this should be cupful?] of warm water; and lo! There is a cup of new milk, sweet and creamy, as if it had just come from the cow; and for every purpose quite equal to it. We see that Soyer, Miss Nightingale, and Dr A. Smith, Director-General of the Medical Department of the Army, have testified to the value of this invention from practical experience of it during the war. A company has been formed to manufacture it on a large scale, and, having tried it, we can vouch for its excellence.

BOURBON

1964: USA

The federal government passed a resolution that recognized bourbon as a “distinctive product” of the USA. Bourbon is whiskey distilled from maize or rye and aged in new charred oak barrels for two years or more.

Popular myth has it that a Baptist minister by the name of Elijah Craig invented bourbon in 1789, and some sources even specify the date of invention as being November 8.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769: Tahiti

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks:

“*Georges Land*” No trade this morn but a little fish so we are for the first time in distress for nessesaries. I went into the woods to Tubourai and perswaded him to give me 5 long baskets of bread fruit, a very seasonable supply as they contain above 120 fruits.

1806: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day, Meriwether Lewis wrote:

[P]urchase[d] 2 lean dogs. [W]e obtained a few large cakes of half cured bread made of a root which resembles the sweet potatoe, with these we made some soope and took breakfast. . . . [A] great portion of the Chopunnish we are informed are now distributed in small vilages through this plain collecting the quawmash and cows; the salmon not yet having arrived to call them to the river. . . . [P]urchased a little wood and some bread of cows from the natives.

And Patrick Gass wrote:

[W]e halted at an Indian lodge, and could get nothing to eat, except some bread made of a kind of roots I was unacquainted with. We had however, a

dog, which we bought from the Indians, who met us last night; but this was a scanty allowance for thirty odd hungry men.

Quawmash is *Camassia quamash*, or camas. It is native to the western North American continent, and was an important food source for indigenous Americans of the region. *Bread of cows* is *Cymopterus bulbosus*. It goes by many names including kouse, cowas, Indian biscuit, and biscuitroot. The long thick taproot can be boiled, roasted, or ground up into flour. Both quamash and bread of cows may be confused with similar-appearing poisonous plants, so care must be taken in harvesting them.



Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast

(Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division [Reproduction number e.g., LC-USZ62-17372])

May 5

FOOD & WAR

1917: USA, World War I, “To the Women of the United States”

Mr. Hoover had said, “Food will win the war,” and it was assumed that a large part of the responsibility for this aspect of the war effort would be taken up by the housewives of the nation. On this day, Secretary Houston of the United States Department of Agriculture issued the following appeal:

To the Women of the United States:

Every woman can render important service to the Nation in its present emergency. She need not leave her home or abandon her home duties to help the armed forces. She can help to feed and clothe our armies and help to supply food to those beyond the seas by practicing effective thrift in her own household.

Every ounce of food the housewife saves from being wasted in her home—all food which she or her children produce in the garden and can or preserve—every garment which care and skilled repair make it unnecessary to replace—all lessen that household’s draft on the already insufficient world supplies.

To save food the housewife must learn to plan economical and properly balanced meals, which, while nourishing each member of the family properly, do not encourage overeating or offer excessive and wasteful variety. It is her duty to use all effective methods to protect food from spoilage by heat, dirt, mice or insects. She must acquire the culinary ability to utilize every bit of edible food that comes into her home. She must learn to use such foods as vegetables, beans, peas, and milk products as partial substitutes for meat. She must make it her business to see that nothing nutritious is thrown away or allowed to be wasted.

Waste in any individual household may seem to be insignificant, but if only a single ounce of edible food, on the average, is allowed to spoil or be thrown away in each of our 20,000,000 homes, over 1,300,000 pounds of material would be wasted each day. It takes the fruit of many acres and the work of many people to raise, prepare and distribute 464,000,000 pounds of food a year. Every ounce of food thrown away, therefore, tends also to waste the work of any army of busy citizens. . . .

. . . While all honor is due to the women who leave their homes to nurse and

care for those wounded in battle, no woman should feel that because she does not wear a nurse's uniform she is absolved from patriotic service. The home women of the country, if they will give their minds fully to this vital subject of food conservation and train themselves in household thrift, can make of the housewife apron a uniform of national significance.

Demonstrate thrift in your homes and encourage thrift among your neighbors.

Make saving rather than spending your social standard

Make economy fashionable lest it become obligatory.

See **September 29**.



“Food will win the war.” Official pictures of the United States Food Administration are shown at this theatre

(Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division [Reproduction number e.g., LC-USZC4-10144])

1941: Britain, World War II

Rationing of cheese began on this day. The warning of the possibility of this unpopular act had come on December 31, 1940, in an announcement by Lord Woolton, the minister of food. Lord Woolton noted that some people needed more cheese—such as workers in physically demanding jobs, and vegetarians, and he went on to say, “If I ration cheese everyone will be short. To avoid this I am going to rely on public opinion. Don’t buy cheese unless you need it. Don’t eat it as an ‘extra.’ Leave it to the fellow who needs it and must have it in order to get on with his job.”

In early March it was clear that cheese was to be rationed, and individuals or families had to register with a retailer by March 29. The basic ration was one ounce per person, per week, with an increased allowance for miners who worked underground, agricultural workers, and vegetarians (the latter having to show that they had not allowed others to use their meat and bacon ration coupons). On June 6, 1946, a special cheese ration was allowed in brick and tile industry which had no meal facilities at work.

Cheese was not derationed in Britain for thirteen years, until May 8, 1954. At its best, the ration was eight ounces a week, in July 1942, but for most of the war it remained at about two ounces per week.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769: Tahiti

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks:

“*Georges Land*”. The wrestling over, the gentlemen informed me that they understood that 2 hogs and a large quantity of Bread fruit *etc.* was cooking for our dinners, news which pleasd me very well as my stomach was by this time sufficiently preparad for the repast. I went out and saw the ovens in

which they were now buried, these the Indians readily shewd me telling me at the same time that they would soon be ready and how good a dinner we should have. In about half an hour all was taken up but now Dootahah began to repent of his intended generosity; he thought I suppose that a hog would be lookd upon as no more than a dinner and consequently no present made in return, he therefore changd his mind and ordering one of the pigs into the boat sent for us who soon collected together and getting our Knives prepar'd to fall too, saying that it was civil of the old gentleman to bring the provisions into the boat where we could with ease keep the people at a proper distance, who in the house would have crowd'd us almost to death. His intention was however very different from ours for instead of asking us to eat he ask'd to go on board of the ship, a measure we were forc'd to comply with and row 4 miles with the pig growing cold under our noses before he would give it to us. Aboard however we dind upon this same pig and his majesty eat very heartily with us. After dinner we went ashore, the sight of Dootahah reconcild to us acted like a charm upon the people and before night bread fruit and cocoa nuts were brought to sell in tolerable plenty.

1806: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day William Clark wrote:

[W]hile at dinner an indian fellow very impertinently threw a half Starved puppy nearly into the plate of Capt. Lewis by way of derision for our eating dogs and laughed very heartily at his own impertinence; Capt L.— was So provoked at the insolence that he cought the puppy and threw it with great violence at him and Struck him in the breast and face, Seazed his tomahawk, and Shewed him by Sign that if he repeeted his insolence that he would tomahawk him, the fellow withdrew apparently much mortified and we continued our Dinner with out further Molestation.

SOCIAL FORCES AT WORK

1926: London, England, the General Strike

An article in the *Times* commented on the food measures taken to overcome

food supply problems in the city that had been generated by the general strike.

Food—Supplies of milk and fish brought into Kings Cross, Euston and Paddington were successfully distributed from the Hyde Park Depot and stations. The Milk & Food Controller expects it will be possible to maintain a satisfactory supply of milk to hospitals, institutions, schools, hotels, restaurants and private consumers. Milk will be 8d. per gallon dearer wholesale and 2d. per quart retail today. Smithfield market has distributed 5,000 tons of meat since Monday.

PASTA

1579: Naples

The *Vermicellari* (Vermicelli Makers' Guild) was founded before 1546 as an offshoot of the Bakers' Guild and was formalized in 1571 with the approval of its charter. On May 5, 1579, the *Vermicellari* purchased a chapel within the Monastery of Santa Maria del Carmelo, as their headquarters.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1801: England

Jane Austen wrote to her sister Cassandra:

Our journey here was perfectly free from accident or event. . . . Between Luggershall and Everley we made our grand meal, and then with admiring astonishment perceived in what a magnificent manner our support had been provided for. We could not with the utmost exertion consume above the twentieth part of the beef. The cucumber will, I believe, be a very acceptable present, as my uncle talks of having inquired the price of one lately, when he was told a shilling.

I am not without hopes of tempting Mrs. Lloyd to settle in Bath; meat is only 8d. per pound, butter 12d., and cheese 9½d. You must carefully conceal from her, however, the exorbitant price of fish: a salmon has been sold at 2s. 9d. per pound the whole fish. The Duchess of York's removal is expected to make that article more reasonable—and till it really appears so, say nothing about salmon

say nothing about salmon.

May 6

SAINT DOMINIC SNAKE FESTIVAL

Italy

Saint Dominic is credited with ridding the region of Cocullo in Abruzzo of snakes at some vague distant time in the past, and thanks are given for his good deed at a festival on this day.

Snakes (local non-poisonous types) are collected on Saint Joseph's Day (March 19) and kept in jars of bran until they are taken out on Saint Dominic's Day and taken to mass, after which they are released. A local speciality of a sweet bread called *ciambelle*, flavored with anise or fennel seeds, and made in the shape of a snake biting its tale, which commemorates the occasion.

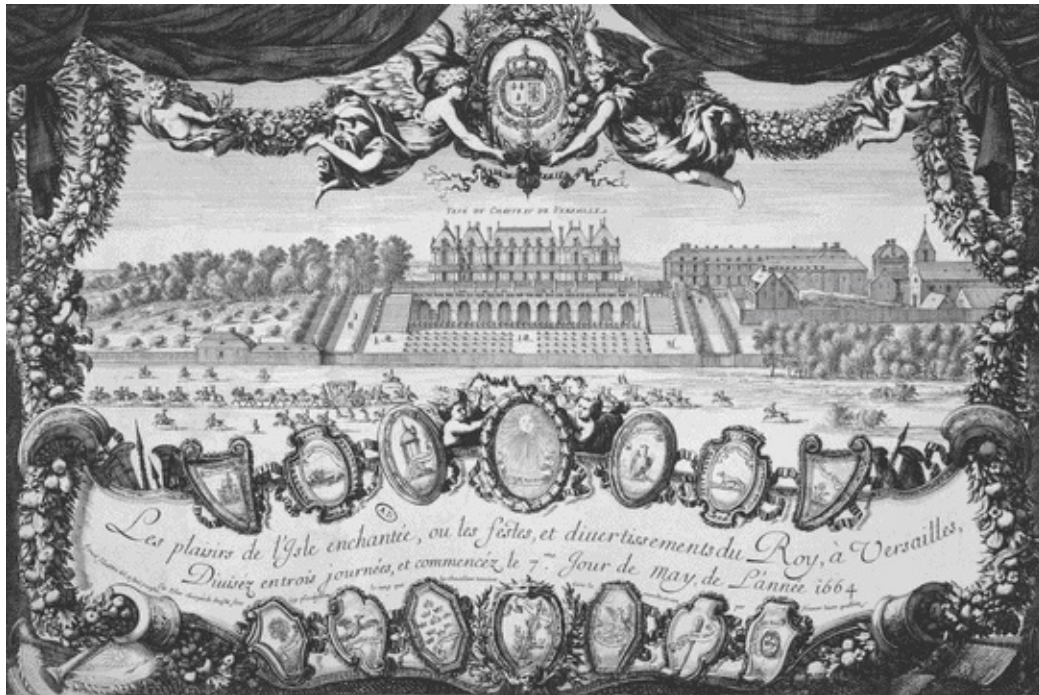
THE PLEASURES OF THE ENCHANTED ISLE

1664: France

Louis XIV held a grand week-long fête at Versailles from May 7–13, which he called *Les Plaisirs de l'Ile Enchantée*. It was a spectacular affair even by the standards of the time. The week was filled with feasting and *divertissements* that included music and ballet composed especially for the occasion.

The first meal was an elaborate collation, and it was presented in the most spectacular way. An orchestra provided the background music, and a parade began with four men representing the four seasons: a gardener carrying fruit (representing spring), a grain harvester carrying bread (summer), a wine harvester (fall) and an old man carrying a basket of ice (winter). Then dancers representing the signs of the zodiac danced in in “one of the most beautiful ballets that anyone had ever seen.” The March of the Four Seasons continued with a parade of forty-eight servants, twelve representing each of the seasons, carrying platters piled with the preserved fruits, vegetables, meat, pastries, and all manner of other delicacies. The kitchens of the huge palace were a quarter of a mile away, and these servants carried the massive platters on their heads.

André Félibien, an official chronicler of the court at the time wrote that “the sumptuousness of the collation surpassed anything that can be described, as much in the abundance as in the delicacy of the things that were served there; it was also the most beautiful sight that the senses could behold.”



Les Plaisirs de l'Isle Enchantée

(De Agostini/Getty Images)

FOOD & THE LAW

1919: France

The *Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée* (AOC) or the Law for the Protection of the Place of Origin was passed on this day. The law stated that in order to claim AOC certification for a particular product, the region and commune where it is manufactured must be specified, and that it must be produced in a consistent and traditional manner.

The concept of protecting regional specialties in this way dates as far back as the

The concept of protecting regional specialties in this way dates as far back as the fifteenth century, when Roquefort cheese was regulated by parliamentary decree.

See **July 30**

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1817: Australia

John Oxley (1785–1828) was one of the earliest explorers and surveyors in the new British colony in Australia. In 1817 he led an expedition to explore the course of the Lachlan River.

If however the country itself is poor, the river is rich in the most excellent fish, procurable in the utmost abundance. One man in less than an hour caught eighteen large fish, one of which was a curiosity from its immense size, and the beauty of its colours. In shape and general form it most resembled a cod, but was speckled over with brown, blue, and yellow spots, like a leopard's skin; its gills and belly a clear white, the tail and fins a dark brown. It weighed entire seventy pounds, and without the entrails sixty-six pounds: it is somewhat singular that in none of these fish is any thing found in the stomach, except occasionally a shrimp or two. The dimensions of this fish were as follows:

	Feet Inches	
Length from the nose to the tail	3	5
Circumference round the shoulders	2	6
Fin to fin over the back	1	5
Circumference near the anus	1	9

Breadth of the tail 1 1½

Circumference of the mouth opened 1 6

Depth of the swallow 1

Most of the other fish taken this evening weighed from fifteen to thirty pounds each, and were of the same kind as the above.

The fish caught by Oxley's team were Murray Cod (*Maccullochella peelii peelii*).

FOOD & WAR

1898: USA, Spanish-American War

From the diary of Joseph Beiler, 1st Ohio Volunteer Cavalry, who was stationed at Camp Thomas, Georgia:

[H]ad just two peices of bread and one potatoe for breakfast fixed our tents up put flors in filled our mattress with straw went over to the head quarters were examined had a peice of bread peice of bacon & cup of coffee at four oclock after we came back wich was our dinner & supper it rained hard all day.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1851: USA

John Gorrie, a Florida physician, was granted the first U.S. patent for mechanical refrigeration. Although he originally developed his process to cool sickrooms of patients with yellow fever, it inevitably had major implications for the commercial, and ultimately, the domestic market. The same basic method using compression of a gas, cooling it through a system of coils, then cooling further by expansion of the gas, is the one still used today.

INTERNATIONAL NO DIET DAY

1992: Britain

The first International No Diet Day was held. It was the brainchild of Mary Evan Young, who had suffered from an eating disorder for many years, and came to realize that society's attitudes toward weight problems was counterproductive to health. May 6 is now celebrated in many countries as a day dedicated to encouraging body acceptance and body shape diversity, to raise awareness of the dangers and futility of restrictive diets and punitive exercise regimens, and to promoting a generally healthy lifestyle.

So for one day, this Sunday May 6, take the pledge:

- I will accept myself just as I am.
- I will feed myself if hungry.
- I will feel no shame or guilt about my size or eating.
- I will LOVE MYSELF for who I am, not who I feel pressured to be.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769: Tahiti

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks:

“*Georges Land*” Plenty of breadfruit at market this morn but few cocoa nuts. After dinner Dootahah visited the tents bringing 5 baskets of breadfruit and some cocoa nuts; he went to the eastward and slept tonight at the long house. Trade rather slack this morn, but we have so much breadfruit before hand from the trade and presents of yesterday that [it] is immaterial whether we buy any or not today.

1770: At Sea

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks:

Went to sea this morn with a fair breeze of wind. The land we saild past during the whole forenoon appeared broken and likely for harbours; in the afternoon again woody and very pleasant. We dind to day upon the sting-ray and his tripe: the fish itself was not quite so good as a scate nor was it much inferior, the tripe every body thought excellent. We had with it a dish of the leaves of *tetragonia cornuta* boild, which eat as well as spinage or very near it.

1806: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day Patrick Gass wrote: “Capt. Lewis and Capt. Clarke acted as physicians to the sick of the village or lodge, for which they gave us a small horse, that we killed and eat, as we had no other meat of any kind.”

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt’s journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

It seems that the seed-vessels of *Nymphaea* and its rhizoma form the principal food of the natives; the seeds contain much starch and oil, and are extremely nourishing. I then gave them some pieces of dried meat, intimating by signs that it must be grilled; soon afterwards they retired. Mr Roper came in with sad tidings; in riding up the steep bank of the river, his horse, unable to get a footing among the loose rocks, had fallen back and broken its thigh. I immediately resolved upon going to the place where the accident had happened, and proposed to my companions, that we should try to make the best of the meat, as the animal was young and healthy, and the supply would greatly assist in saving our bullocks to the end of our long journey; and they declared themselves willing at all events to give a fair trial to the horseflesh. Our bullocks were foot-sore and required rest. We, therefore, shot the horse, skinned and quartered it the same night; and ate its liver and kidneys, which were quite as good as those of a bullock.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1850: USA

From the *Notebooks* of Nathaniel Hawthorne:

Certainly life is made much more tolerable, and man respects himself far more, when he takes his meals with a certain degree of order and state. There should be a sacred law in these matters; and, as consecrating the whole business, the preliminary prayer is a good and real ordinance. The advance of man from a savage and animal state may be as well measured by his mode and morality of dining, as by any other circumstance.

May 7

THE TSAR IN PARIS

1717: Paris

The tsar of Russia, Peter the Great, visited Paris in May and June 1717 on his grand

European tour. Accommodations had been prepared for him in the Queen Mother's apartments (the Louvre was at that time the Royal Palace). Before his visit, the French chefs who would be responsible for feeding him were advised of his food and drink preferences.

He likes sharp sauces, brown and hard bread, green peas. He eats many sweet oranges and apples and pears. He drinks light beer and dark *vin de nuits* without liquor; in the morning he drinks *kummel*. He eats no sweetmeats, and does not drink sweetened [liquors] with his meals.

A banquet was ready for the Tsar when he arrived. The table had been set for sixty, but Peter only nibbled a little bread and some radishes. He did, however, sample six types of wine and drank two beers.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1802: Britain

Sir Edward Thomason was issued a patent for his “New Invented Material Article in the Making of CorkScrews.”

To all to whom these presents shall come, I, Edward Thomason, of Birmingham, in the County of Warwick, Manufacturer, send greeting. Whereas His most Excellent Majesty King George the Third, by His letters Patent Under the Great Seal of Great Britain, bearing date at Westminster. . . . In respect to principle, I cause the cork to be extracted from the simple continuation of turning the screw to the right hand, and this performed without any rack wheel, lock, or spring, and I cause the cork to be discharged from the the screw.

FOOD & WAR

1941: Britain, World War II

From the wartime diary of housewife Nella Last:

I don't really like my butcher to “send what he can.” I got veal and mutton for a pie. I'd have preferred beef and mutton, but it should be alright; a veal jelly-bone, with enough meat on it to make a little bowl of potted meat, and a shank-end mutton bone for a stock-pot, all for 2s. 1d. . . . My butcher laughs at me, says I shop like a French woman who demands the best, even if it costs less. I understand what he means for I'll order brisket in preference to sirloin, pot-roast it till it's like chicken, or steam and press it and have soft, butter-like fat for cooking—at half the price of sirloin which, after eating once hot, is apt to be rather dreary.

1944: Britain, World War II

Vere Hodgson kept a diary during the war, and it was later published as *Few Eggs and No Oranges: A Diary showing How Unimportant People in London and Birmingham Lived through the War Years 1940–45* Written in the Notting Hill Area of London.

In her entry on this day, she described her household's meals for the week:

Meat ration lasts only for three evening meals. Cannot be made to go any further, that is Saturday, Sunday, and Monday. Tuesday and Wednesday I

cook a handful of rice, dodged up in some way with curry or cheese. But the cheese ration is so small there is little left. Thursday I have an order with the dairy for a pound of sausage. These make do for Thursday, Friday and part of Saturday. No taste much of sausage but are of soya bean flour. We just pretend they are the real thing. A little fish would help. But there are queues for it. All rather monotonous, but we are not hungry, and the authorities have done well for us, we consider.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia: "We cut the meat in slices, and dried it; and though there was some prejudice against it, it would have been very difficult to have detected any difference between it and beef; particularly if the animals had been in the same condition."

1861: Australia

From the notes and journals of members of the ill-fated Burke and Wills expedition to cross Australia from south to north in 1860–1861:

Breakfasted at daylight, . . . At about eleven miles we came to some blacks fishing. They gave us some half a dozen fish each for luncheon, and intimated that if we would go to their camp we should have some more, and some bread. I tore in two a piece of macintosh stuff that I had, and Mr Burke gave one piece, and I the other. We then went on to their camp, about three miles farther. They had caught a considerable quantity of fish, but most of them were small. I noticed three different kinds—a small one that they call cupi, five to six inches long, and not broader than an eel; the common one, with large coarse scales, termed peru; and a delicious fish, some of which run from a pound to two pounds weight. The natives call them cawilchi. On our arrival at the camp, they led us to a spot to camp on, and soon afterwards brought a lot of fish and bread, which they call nardoo. The lighting a fire with matches delights them, but they do not care about having them. In the evening various members of the tribe came down with lumps of nardoo and handfuls of fish, until we were positively unable to eat any more. They also gave us some stuff they call badgery, or padgery. It

any more. They also gave us some stuff they call beugery, or peugery. It has a highly intoxicating effect when chewed even in small quantities. It appears to be the dried stems and leaves of some shrub.

Nardoo or *ngardu* is *Marsilea drummondii*, a common aquatic fern of inland Australia which formed an important part of the diet of many aboriginal tribes before white settlement. The plant is remarkably drought resistant as the roots can lie dormant for long periods only to burst into life again after rain. Correct preparation is essential as the plant contains an enzyme called thiaminase, which destroys vitamin B1 and can therefore cause the deficiency illness beri-beri. It is likely that Burke and Wills did not realize that the seeds must be soaked for some time to leach out the thiaminase, and that beri-beri, not starvation, contributed to their deaths.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1850: USA

From the *Notebooks* of Nathaniel Hawthorne:

I did not go out yesterday afternoon, but after tea I went to Parker's. The drinking and smoking shop is no bad place to see one kind of life. The front apartment is for drinking. The door opens into Court Square, and is denoted, usually, by some choice specimens of dainties exhibited in the windows, or hanging beside the door-post; as, for instance, a pair of canvas-back ducks, distinguishable by their delicately mottled feathers; an admirable cut of raw beefsteak; a ham, ready boiled, and with curious figures traced in spices on its outward fat; a half, or perchance the whole, of a large salmon, when in season; a bunch of partridges, etc., etc.

At dinner to-day there was a young Frenchman, whom . . . befriended a year or so ago, when he had not another friend in America, and obtained employment for him in a large dry-goods establishment. He is a young man of eighteen or thereabouts, with smooth black hair, neatly dressed; his face showing a good disposition, but with nothing of intellect or character. It is funny to think of this poor little Frenchman, a Parisian too, eating our most un-French victuals,—our beefsteaks, and roasts, and various homely puddings, and hams, and all things most incongruent to his hereditary stomach; but nevertheless he eats most cheerfully and uncomplainingly. . . . Our gross Seven courses would soon be the ruin of his French constitution

Our gross Saxon orgies would soon be the ruin of his French constitution.

May 8

Furry Day

Helston, Cornwall, England

“Furry Day” or “The Flora” is one of Britain’s oldest folk festivals still celebrated today. Its roots are ancient, and are based in old pagan rites of spring. The events were later Christianized to represent St. Michael’s victory over Satan.

A traditional dish on the day is *Helston pudding*.

Helston Pudding

Two tablespoonfuls each of flour, sugar, breadcrumbs, ground rice, currants, and sultanas, three tablespoonfuls of chopped suet, one tablespoonful cut candied peel, pinch of salt. Mix up with milk in which one teaspoonful of carbonate of soda has been dissolved. Boil or steam in a greased basin for two or three hours.

—*Pot-luck or, The British home cookery book* (1915) by May Byron

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

1348: England, Punishment of the Pillory

In medieval times, when the bulk of the population was illiterate, dates were usually recorded in reference to the nearest saints day or other religious observance. In 1348, May 6 was a Wednesday, so the following Friday, the day that the following decision was made, was May 8.

At a congregation of Thomas Leggy, the Mayor, the Aldermen, Sheriffs, and an immense number of the Commonalty, on the Friday next after the Feast of St. John Port Latin [6 May], . . . John, son of John Gylessone, of Resham, and Agnes la Ismongere, were questioned for that on that day they had exposed for sale, in divers places in the City of London, putrid and

stinking meat; in deceit, and to the peril of the lives of persons buying the same, and to the scandal and disgrace of the Mayor, Aldermen, Sheriffs, and all the Commonalty, of the city aforesaid.

And the said Agnes for herself says, that she bought meat of the aforesaid John, son of John Gylesone, to the value of 4 pence, supposing that the same was good and proper, and without any default; and which meat she, Agnes, with such belief, exposed for sale. And the said John in full Court acknowledged that he had sold the meat aforesaid to the said Agnes, for the price before mentioned; further acknowledging, of his own accord, that shortly before he sold to the said Agnes the meat aforesaid, he had found a certain dead sow, thrown out near the ditch without Alegate, in the suburb of London; which sow he then flayed, and the flesh of the same, cooked as well as raw, he exposed for sale to the aforesaid Agnes, and to others who chose to buy it.

And conference having been held between the Mayor, Aldermen, and Commonalty, as to the said deed, and the acknowledgment thereof, it was awarded that the same flesh, so found upon the said Agnes, and sold to her by John before mentioned, and the skin of the said sow, found in the possession of the said John, should be carried by the Sheriffs of the City in public before him, the said John, to the pillory on Cornhulle; and that he, the said John, should be first upon the pillory there, and the said flesh be burnt beneath him, while upon the pillory.

And seeing that the said Agnes thought that the said meat, so sold to her, was good and proper, when she bought the same, it was awarded that she should go acquitted thereof.

FOOD & THE LAW

1512: Venice

One of the numerous sumptuary laws of Venice in the Middle Ages and Renaissance was enacted on this day.

The law went into minute detail as to the type of food and number of dishes which could be provided at a banquet, and then placed a huge responsibility on the waiters and cooks to assist in policing the law.

[T]he waiters and cooks who serve at the said feasts are compelled, the waiters under pain of 20 ducats, and the cooks under pain of 10 ducats and four months' imprisonment, to come to our office and declare the time and place of any banquet for which they have been engaged, in order that our officers may be sent to inspect, and find out if in any respect the law will be violated. And the waiters, under the aforesaid penalty, are under obligation to lead the officers through the halls and smaller rooms, in order that they may perform their duty. And if any person of the house where they happen to be, or any other person, should interfere with our officers, and forbid them to do their duty, or should molest them in any way by making use of injurious epithets, or throwing bread or oranges at their heads, as certain presumptuous persons have done, or should be guilty of any insolent act, it will be the duty of the waiters to leave the house immediately, and not wait nor be present at the banquet, under the aforesaid penalty. And nevertheless they shall have their salary, as if they had served.

FOOD FIRSTS

1886: USA

An "Esteemed Brain Tonic and Intellectual Beverage" was launched on this day by Dr. John S. Pemberton of Atlanta, Georgia. It was a non-alcoholic alternative to his popular French Wine Coca, and it was called Coca-Cola. The new beverage contained extracts of coca leaves (containing cocaine) and kola nuts (containing caffeine), which no doubt were responsible for some of its claimed benefits, and its growth in popularity. The tonic was said to be useful for "all nervous affections, sick headache, neuralgia, hysteria, and melancholy." It was also advised for "scientists, scholars, poets, divines, lawyers, physicians, and others devoted to mental exertion."

Pemberton's product was in the form of a syrup which he took to the nearby Jacob's Pharmacy where it was mixed with soda and sold for five cents a glass. In the first year sales averaged nine glasses a day.

In 1891 Pemberton, who was in financial difficulty, sold the company to Asa Chandler for \$2,300, who began to bottle it on a commercial scale in 1899.

In 1903 the company removed cocaine from the formula in response to increasing public pressure.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1841: Australia

From the journal of Edward John Eyre (1815–1901) on an expedition into the inland of Central Australia:

The day was wild and stormy, and we did not start until late. Even then we could only get the tired horse along for three miles, and were again compelled to halt. Water was still procured, by digging under the sand-hills, but we had to sink much deeper than we had lately found occasion to do. It was now plain, that the tired horse would never be able to keep pace with the others, and that we must either abandon him, or proceed at a rate too slow for the present state of our commissariat. Taking all things into consideration, it appeared to me that it would be better to kill him at once for food, and then remain here in camp for a time, living upon the flesh, whilst the other horses were recruiting, after which I hoped we might again be able to advance more expeditiously. Upon making this proposal to Wylie, he was quite delighted at the idea, and told me emphatically that he would sit up and eat the whole night. Our decision arrived at, the sentence was soon executed. The poor animal was shot, and Wylie and myself were soon busily employed in skinning him. Leaving me to continue this operation, Wylie made a fire close to the carcass, and as soon as he could get at a piece of the flesh he commenced roasting some, and continued alternately, eating, working and cooking. After cutting off about 100 pounds of the best of the meat, and hanging it in strips upon the trees until our departure, I handed over to Wylie the residue of the carcass, feet, entrails, flesh, skeleton, and all, to cook and consume as he pleased, whilst we were in the neighbourhood. Before dark he had made an oven, and roasted about twenty pounds, to feast upon during the night. The evening set in stormy, and threatened heavy rain, but a few drops only fell. The wind then rose very high, and raged fiercely from the south-west. At midnight it lulled, and the night became intensely cold and frosty, and both Wylie and myself suffered severely, we could only get small sticks for our fire, which burned out in a few minutes, and required so frequently renewing, that we were obliged to give it up in despair, and bear the cold in the best way we could. Wylie, during the night, made a sad and dismal groaning, and complained of being very ill, from pain in his throat, the effect he said of having to work too hard. I did not find that his

indisposition interfered very greatly with his appetite, for nearly every time I awoke during the night, I found him up and gnawing away at his meat, he was literally fulfilling the promise he had made me in the evening, “By and bye, you see, Massa, me ‘pta’ (eat) all night.”

May 9

Lemuria

In ancient Rome, this was the first day of the *Lemuria*, the nine-day feast of the dead. The Vestals would prepare the sacred *mola salsa* (salt cake) from the first ears of wheat of the season. It was believed that on this day a passage opened up between the living world and the underworld. The man of the house would fill his mouth with black beans, and walk around the house, spitting them out—supposedly the ghosts would follow, picking up the beans. No one could look at the ghosts until this ceremony had been completed nine times.

PRINCE HENRY’S HOUSEHOLD

1610: England and Scotland

Prince Henry Stuart, the eldest son of King James I of England (James VI of Scotland), and heir to the throne, was born in February 1594. In June 1610 he was created Prince of Wales. His intelligence and nature were such that there were great expectations of his being a brave and good king. In November, aged sixteen years, he died of a sudden severe fever, and the throne went to his brother, who became Charles I.

Just before his investiture as Prince of Wales, on May 9, 1610, a large number of orders and regulations were laid down in relation to the running of Prince Henry’s household. The regulations covered the “assignation of such landes and revenues as were appointed” to him.

They also covered in a great deal of detail the “allowance of diet, wages, boardwages, rewards, and lyveries that were belonging unto his chamber, household, and stables.”

Even the content of the Prince’s meals were specifically ordained. For example:

For the Prince his Highness Breakefast

Manchet, 2

Cheate, fine, 2

Cheate, 4

Beere, 3 gallons

Wine, 1 picher

Beefe 1 service

Mutton 1 service

Chickennes 2

The meal allowances (the “*bouche* of the court”) for every member of the household staff were also set out in detail, and the hierarchy was clear. More important members received more dishes in each “messe” than those in more lowly jobs, and the food was of a finer quality. The “Cofferer, Clerke Comptroller, and Chiefe Clerke of the Kitchin” received six dishes per messe for dinner and supper.

Dinner

Supper

Manchet, 2

Manchet, 2

Manchet, ryne	2	Manchet, ryne
Cheate	6	Cheate
Beere	3 gallons	Beere
Gascoine wine	1 picher	Gascoine wine
Sacke		Sacke
Beefe and Mutton	1 service	Mutton boyled
Veale rost	2 services	Mutton rost
Capon	1	Capon
Conyes	2	Conyes
Custer	1	Dulcets
Tart	1	Tart

The “Laundresse for the body and the Clocke-Keeper” however were entitled only to dinner, at which they had only one dish. Their cheate bread was made from coarse brown flour, and their allowance of beer only a dim’ gallon (half a gallon).

Dinner

Cheate. course. 1

Beere, dim' gallon

Veale, 1 service

FOOD & WAR

1898: USA, Spanish-American War

Joseph Beiler (1870–1925) enlisted in the 1st Ohio Volunteer Cavalry, Troop B, and served as a cook. He expected to see active service, but his troop remained in the United States for the duration of the war. At this time he was in Camp Thomas in Chickamauga, Georgia.

I was put on guard duty last night was two hours on & four hours of for 24 hours had to stay at the guard house all the time I was not out on a post duty well every thing goes along lovely now we had three pretty good meals today we had ham & eggs for breakfast browned ribs of beef potatoes & bread for dinner & beef steak & fried onions & bread for supper we are now soldiers of the U. S. of A. [W]e were sworn in this evening there were 20 thrown out of troop B. before we were sworn.

1943: USA, World War II

First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and Mrs. Henrietta Nesbitt were interviewed by a journalist at the *New York Times* on the topic of rationing in the White House. The article was published on this day.

Mrs. Nesbitt explained that for the purposes of rationing, the White House was classified as “an institution” and allowances were therefore allotted for two months at a time, based on the average number of people fed. Mrs. Nesbitt explained how this amount had been calculated, and went on to discuss the practicalities:

Except for guests, Mrs Nesbit does not think that meat rationing will bear too hard on the White House. The President’s favourite dinner entrees are fish and game, and he likes eggs for breakfast, especially scrambled eggs, and kippered herring “when we can get it.” The First Lady is very easy to please: she appreciates meals well cooked and nicely served. but is

otherwise indifferent about food, without strong preferences as to kinds. Mrs. Nesbitt can think of only two dishes that Mrs Roosevelt especially likes, and neither of these will use up meat points. One is kedgerree, the other is broiled chicken livers with rice. Kedgerree, for those who do not know it, is boiled white fish, with rice and eggs. Here is the recipe for Mrs. Roosevelt's dish.

Kedgerree

One cup of any boiled fish, flaked, to one cup of rice, two hard-boiled eggs, and seasoning to taste. Mix all the ingredients together, heat again, and serve hot, with the eggs chopped, of course, and added. If one likes the mixture a little moist, milk may be added.

A “BLUBBER BASH”

1991: Tokyo, Japan

A dinner was held on this day in Tokyo to protest a worldwide ban on whale fishing. It was timed to coincide with the annual meeting of the International Whaling Commission being held in Iceland, and was a clear statement of Japan's stance on the issue. What one reporter called “A Blubber Bash” and another “the sickest dinner ever served” was attended by three hundred guests amongst whom were a number of parliamentarians and other prominent persons.

Two hundred and sixty-five pounds of whale meat were used to provide the dishes, which included whale sashimi, deep-fried whale chunks, whale bacon, barbecued whale, and noodle soup garnished with cubes of whale tongue and tail.

THE COMPLEAT ANGLER

1653: England

The Compleat Angler, or, the Contemplative Man's Recreation was published by Isaac Walton. Although not intended as a cookbook, it does contain much

information on cooking fish. Here is Walton on how to roast a pike:

[I]f this direction to catch a Pike thus do you no good, I am certaine this direction how to roste him when he is caught, is choicely good, for I have tryed it, and it is somewhat the better for not being common; but with my direction you must take this Caution, that your Pike must not be a smal one.

First open your Pike at the gills, and if need be, cut also a little slit towards his belly; out of these, take his guts, and keep his liver, which you are to shred very small with Time [thyme] Sweet Margerom and a little Winter-Savoury; to these put some pickled Oysters, and some Anchovis, both these last whole (for the Anchovis will melt, and the Oysters should not) to these you must add also a pound of sweet Butter, which you are to mix with the herbs that are shred, and let them all be well salted (if the Pike be more then a yard long, then you may put into these herbs more then a pound, or if he be less, then less Butter will suffice): these being thus mixt, with a blade or two of Mace, must be put into the Pikes belly, and then his belly sowed up; then you are to thrust the spit through his mouth out at his tail; and then with four, or five, or six split sticks or very thin laths, and a convenient quantitie of tape or filiting, these laths are to be tyed roundabout the Pikes body, from his head to his tail, and the tape tied somewhat thick to prevent his breaking or falling off from the spit; let him be rosted very leisurely, and often basted with Claret wine, and Anchovis, and butter mixt together, and also with what moisture falls from him into the pan: when you have rosted him sufficiently, you are to hold under him (when you unwind or cut the tape that ties him) such a dish as you purpose to eat him out of, and let him fall into it with the sawce that is rosted in his belly; and by this means the Pike will be kept unbroken and complete; then to the sawce, which was within him, and also in the pan, you are to add a fit quantity of the best butter, and to squeeze the juice of three or four Oranges: lastly, you may either put into the Pike with the Oysters, two cloves of Garlick, and take it whole out when the Pike is cut off the spit, or to give the sawce a hogoe, let the dish (into which you let the Pike fall) be rubed with it; the using or not using of this Garlick is left to your discretion.

This dish of meat is too good for any but Anglers or honest men; and, I trust, you will prove both, and therefore I have trusted you with this Secret.

1769: Tahiti

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks:

Cocoa nuts have been for some days rather scarce, we are therefore obliged for the first time to bring out our nails. Last night our smallest size about 4 inches long were offered for 20 Cocoa nuts, accordingly this morn several came with that number so that we had plenty of them. Smaller lots as well as bread fruit sold as usual for beads.

Soon after breakfast Came Oborea, Obadee and Tupia bringing a hog and some breadfruit; they stayd with us till night then took away their canoe and promised to return in 3 days. We had to day 350 Cocoa nuts and more bread fruit than we would buy so that we aproach our former plenty.

We have now got the Indian name of the Island, *Otahite*, so therefore for the future I shall call it.

1806: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day, Meriwether Lewis wrote:

I have no doubt but this tract of country if cultivated would produce in great abundance every article essentially necessary to the comfort and subsistence of civillized man. [T]o it's present inhabitants nature seems to have dealt with a liberal hand, for she has distributed a great variety of esculent plants over the face of the country which furnish them a plentiful store of provision; these are acquired with but little toil, when prepared after the method of the natives afford not only a nutritious but an agreeable food. [A]mong other roots those called by them the quawmash and Cows are esteemed the most agreeable and valuable as they are also the most abundant, the cows is a knobbed root of an irregularly rounded form not unlike the gensang in form and consistence. [T]his root they collect, rub off [f] a thin black rhind which covers it and pounding it expose it in cakes to the sun. these cakes are about an inch and 1/4 thick and 6 by 18 in width, when dryed they either eat this bread alone without any further preperation, or boil it and make a thick musilage; the latter is most common and the most agreeable, the flavor of this root is not very unlike the gensang. This root they collect as early as the snows disappear in the spring and continue to collect it untill the quawmash supplys it's place which happens about the

latter end of June. [1] The quawmash is also collected for a few weeks after it first makes its appearance in the spring, but when the scape appears it is no longer fit for use until the seed are ripe which happens about the time just mentioned, and then the crows decline. The latter is also frequently dried in the sun and pounded afterwards and then used in making soope.

HIGH TEA

1893: England

The *Daily Telegraph* gave a description of a “high tea”:

A well-understood “high tea” should have cold roast beef at the top of the table, a cold Yorkshire pie at the bottom, a mighty ham in the middle. The side dishes will comprise soured mackerel, pickled salmon (in due season), sausages and potatoes, etc., etc. Rivers of tea, coffee, and ale, with dry and buttered toast, sally-lunns, scones, mufflins, and crumpets, jams and marmalade.

This description is very much at odds with the common view of high tea. We think of elegant bite-sized sandwiches and tiny cakes, and tea served fine china cups by the lady of the house. The description above, however, is historically correct. High tea was a substitute for dinner, taken in the early evening at the dining table (which is high). Low tea, however, was taken in the mid-afternoon, to keep one going until a late evening dinner. It was taken at a low table—what we might call a coffee-table today. Low tea was an indisputably high-class and ladylike affair, as the lower classes were never able to take a leisurely break in mid-afternoon or to stay up late eating and drinking until the small hours.

May 10

THE CORONATION BANQUET

1937: Buckingham Palace, London, England

The coronation of King George VI took place on this day, and was followed by the customary banquet. The menu was as follows:

Coronation of King George VI

Consomme Georges VI

-

Rosettes de Saumon à l'Écossaise

-

Chaufroid de Volaille, Reine Elizabeth

-

Jambon de York Braisé Sandringham

-

Cailles Rôtis sur Canapés à la Royale

Salade Aida

-

Asperges Vertes, Sauce Mouselline

-

Biscuits Glacés Reine Mary

Corbeilles de Friandises

-

Quiche de Lorraine

U.S. STATE FOOD

1999: Vermont, USA

The state legislature formally denoted the apple pie as the official state pie. It was further determined that “when serving apple pie in Vermont, a ‘good faith’ effort shall be made to meet one or more of the following conditions”:

1. with a glass of cold milk,
2. with a slice of cheddar cheese weighing a minimum of 1/2 ounce,
3. with a large scoop of vanilla ice cream.

FOOD & WAR

1857: India

The Sepoy Mutiny, which began on this day, was the beginning of what came to be called the Indian Rebellion of 1857, which in turn was a key point in the growing resentment against British rule. Sepoys were native troops in the service of the British Army and the British East India Company. Grievances and unrest had been building for a long time, but the introduction of the new Enfield rifle provided a flash-point for the mutiny. Before the rifles could be loaded, the greasy paper cartridges had to be bitten off. It was widely believed that the grease used on the cartridges was from either cows or pigs—and absolutely counter to the religious laws of the Hindu and Muslim soldiers respectively. Much blood was spilled over the next few months, but by June 1858 the British had regained control of India.

FOOD & THE LAW

1773: Britain

The Tea Act received royal assent on this day, and thereby became law. It was strongly opposed in the American colonies, where smuggling was a widespread response to high duties on tea. If the colonists could be persuaded (or forced) to buy tea on which duties were paid, then this would be an implicit acceptance of the British Parliament's right to collect taxes in the colony. The well-known response was the "Boston Tea Party," a significant trigger for the American Revolutionary War.

1893: USA, Fruit or Vegetable?

The U.S. Supreme Court declared the tomato to be a vegetable, in spite of its botanical definition as a fruit. The path to this started with the Tariff Act of March 3, 1883, which placed a 10 percent duty on imported vegetables, but not fruits. The New York customs collector, in the interests of revenue raising, declared the tomato to be a vegetable. An action was eventually brought before the court on February 4, 1887, by one importer, to recover duties paid on tomatoes from the West Indies. The court considered the evidence, asked the experts and consulted dictionaries, but eventually decided along the lines of “the common language of the people” and declared “any plant or part thereof eaten during the main dish is a vegetable. If it is eaten at any other part of the meal it is a fruit.”

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

1744: London, England

Elizabeth Robinson of Middlesex and two other women were tried and convicted at the Old Bailey on charges of stealing 104 imported China oranges from a grocer’s warehouse with the intent to sell them. Robinson was sentenced to be transported to the American colonies for seven years. She was pregnant at the time, and gave birth aboard the *Justitia* en route to Virginia. It appears that Robinson continued her thieving ways in her new country.

FOOD FIRSTS

1637: England

John Evelyn made the first known note of coffee drinking in England on this day:

There came in my time to the college (Baliol, Oxford) one Nathaniel Conopios, out of Greece, from Cyrill, the Patriarch of Constantinople, who, returning many years after was made (as I understand) Bishop of Smyrna. He was the first I ever saw drink coffee; which custom came not into England till thirty years thereafter.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1620: At Sea

Jens Munck (1579–1628) was a Danish navigator and explorer famous for his search for a North-West passage to India in 1619–1620, during which he became the first European to explore the Hudson Bay area. By this time he had lost many of his men to the great scourge of long voyages of the time—scurvy. Scurvy is caused by vitamin C deficiency due to insufficient fruit and vegetables over a prolonged period. “On this day the weather was fine and mild, and a great number of geese arrived; we got one of them, which sufficed us for two meals. We were, at that time, eleven persons alive, counting the sick.” By June 4, only Munck and two others, suffering badly from scurvy themselves, were still alive. The three nevertheless managed to sail their sloop back to Europe.

1806: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day Meriwether Lewis wrote:

[S]now continued falling . . . the snow 8 inches deep on the plain; . . . we descended the hills to Commearp Creek and arrived at the Village of Tunnachemootoolt . . . the Cheif spoke to his people and they produced us about 2 bushels of the quawmas roots dried, four cakes of the bread of cows and a dried salmon trout. [W]e thanked them for this store of provision but informed them that our men not being accustomed to live on roots alone we feared it would make them sick, to obviate which we proposed exchangeing a [goo] horse in reather low order for a young horse in tolerable order with a view to kill. the hospitality of the cheif revolted at the eydea of an exchange, he told us that his young men had a great abundance of young horses and if we wished to eat them we should by [be] furnished with as many as we wanted. [A]ccordingly they soon produced us two fat young horses one of which we killed, the other we informed them we would postpone killing untill we had consumed the one already killed. This is a much greater act of hospitality than we have witnessed from any nation or tribe since we have passed the Rocky mountains. [I]n short be it spoken to their immortal honor it is the only act which deserves the appellation of hospitallity which we have witnessed in this quarter.

. . . as these people had been liberal with us with respect to provision I directed the men not to croud their lodge [in] surch of food in the manner

hunger has compelled them to do at most lodges we have passed, and which the Twisted hair had informed me was disagreeable to the natives. [B]ut their previous want of hospitality had induced us to consult their inclinations but little and suffer our men to obtain provision from them on the best terms they could. . . . the noise of their women pounding roots reminds me of a nail factory. The indians seem well pleased, and I am confident that they are not more so than our men who have their s[t]omachs once more well filled with horsebeef and mush of the bread of cows. [T]he house of coventry is also seen here.

1806: Alaska

Count Nikolai Petrovich Resanov, chamberlain of the tsar of Russia, traveled to the Russian colonies in Alaska in early 1806 and found that food supplies were so poor that many were starving. He bought a shipload of food from an American vessel, but these provisions did not go far. He then decided to sail to the California and try to trade for food, knowing that the ports there were closed to foreign ships and he risked a severe penalty. He reached San Francisco on April 8, 1806, and managed to negotiate supplies with Spanish authorities. On May 8, 1806, the ship set sail for New Archangel, its hold full of supplies for the Russian settlers there.

From the journal of Dr. Georg von Langsdorff, the ship's surgeon aboard the *Juno*, where he describes the provisions:

Our Commander, the Baron Von Resanoff, at length, after much trouble and negociation, succeeded in getting on board the *Juno* four thousand and two hundred and ninety-four measures of com, with a large quantity of flour, pease, beans, and maize, together with a few casks of salted meat and a small provision of salt, soap, tallow, and some other articles. For all this he gave in exchange merchandise to the amount of twenty-four thousand Spanish dollars. I was somewhat surprized that, instead of so very large a proportion of com, he did not rather take more salted meat, as it was of an excellent quality, and much cheaper. It is however a certain fact, that a Russian always prefers a piece of bread to a proportionate quantity of meat, and M. Von Resanoff probably thought that in procuring the means of having plenty of bread he had superseded all other wants.

1861: Australia

Burke and Wills, on their famous but ill-fated journey of exploration to the interior of Australia were south of Cooper Creek. On this day, Wills wrote:

Mr Burke and King employed in jerking the camel's flesh, whilst I went out to look for the nardoo seed for making bread. In this I was unsuccessful, not being able to find a single tree of it in the neighbourhood of the camp. I however tried boiling the large kind of bean which the blacks call padlu; they boil easily, and when shelled are very sweet, much resembling in taste the French chestnut. They are to be found in large quantities nearly everywhere.

Nardoo: See **May 7**.

Padlu was the name given by the Yandruwandha people to the bean-tree, or Native Bauhinia (*Lysiphyllum gilvum*).

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1675: France

Fresh green peas were a new and fashionable treat at the court of Louis XIV, as *Mme. De Maintenon* (the mistress and then secret second wife of Louis XIV) indicated in a letter she wrote to Cardinal de Noailles on this day.

This subject of peas continues to absorb all others. The anxiety to eat them, the pleasure of having eaten them and the desire to eat them again, are three great matters which have been discussed by our princes for four days past. Some ladies, even after having supped at the Royal table and well supped too, returning to their own homes, at the risk of suffering indigestion will again eat peas before going to bed. It is both a fashion and a madness.

Pease, or field peas, were a staple food in Europe since ancient times. The variety was grown specifically for drying and long-keeping, and were made into pottage when needed. Horticultural developments in the mid-seventeenth century produced *petits pois*—small tender peas which could be eaten fresh from the pod. This was such an extravagant treat that they rapidly became a fad amongst the ladies of the court, who were ever looking for novelty.

1639: England

Lady Brilliana Harley, at home in Brampton Bryan in Herefordshire, wrote regularly to her son Edward while he was away at Oxford. She also frequently sent gifts of food: “I have made a pye to send to you; it is a kide pye. I beleeve you hae not that meate ordinaryly at Oxford; one halfe is seased with one kind of seasening, and the other with another. I thinke to send it by this carrier.”

It might seem a strange gift to send to a son away at college, particularly in the days long before refrigeration, but in fact this was a common thing in the past. A pie made with dense, thick pastry, if kept dry and without cracking, was virtually airtight. The pastry shell, or coffin, functioned as a baking container, a convenient package for transporting the contents, and a way of preserving them.

May 11

Eleven Fish

“Eleven fish” are shad, a type of herring found in both fresh and salt water. They were sometimes called eleven fish by early Dutch settlers because the first spring shad ascended the Delaware River on May 11. They are also called plank fish due to the Native American way of cooking them on a plank of wood.

U.S. STATE FOOD

1977: Texas, USA

The state legislature officially adopted chili as the official state food. The rationale was clearly spelled out in the documentation, which shows a keen sense of humor on the part of the legislators.

WHEREAS, One cannot be a true son or daughter of this state without having his taste buds tingle at the thought of the treat that is real, honest-to-goodness, unadulterated Texas chili; and

WHEREAS, Texans continue today the tradition begun in San Antonio 140 years ago of making the best and only authentic concoction of this piquant delicacy; and

WHEREAS, President Lyndon B. Johnson commented that “chili concocted outside of Texas is a weak, apologetic imitation of the real thing,” and Will Rogers described Texas chili as “the bowl of blessedness”; and

WHEREAS, Texas has been the site of the annual International Chili Cook-Off since 1967 and is the home of the 1976 World Champion Chili Cooker, Albert Agnor, of Marshall; and

WHEREAS, It is customary for the legislature to designate certain state emblems in recognition of this state’s great heritage and rich resources; and

WHEREAS, The beauty of Texas trees and flowers is represented by the pecan and bluebonnet and the mockingbird is emblematic of our abundant and varied wildlife, but the internationally esteemed cuisine of this great state had received no official recognition and has no official symbol; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the State of Texas, the Senate concurring, That the 65th Legislature in recognition of the fact that the only real “bowl of red” is that prepared by Texans, hereby proclaims chili as the “State Dish of Texas.”

DILLIGROUT

1068: London, England

Matilda, the wife of William I (“The Conqueror”) was crowned queen consort on this day, and a new coronation banquet tradition began.

William’s cook was a Norman by the name of Tezelin, and it is said that a white soup which he made for the coronation, called “Dilligrout,” so pleased the King that he gave Tezelin a manor at Addington in Surrey, on the condition that the manor provide this dish at future coronations in perpetuity. The tradition lasted over a thousand years. The dish was last served at the coronation of King George IV in 1821. In 1902, the owner of Addington Manor, a South African diamond millionaire called Frederick English, applied to serve dilligrout at the coronation of King Edward VIII, but his offer was refused on the grounds that the custom had been discontinued.

We will never be sure as to the exact recipe for this soup. It is probable that the name has as the same root as “groat” and “grit,” referring to coarse grain. Some sources suggest that it was “an herb pudding boiled in a pig’s caul,” or that it was “compounded of almond milk, the brawn of capons, sugar and spices, chicken parboiled and chopped.” The latter dish sounds like an early medieval style recipe, and certainly one elegant enough to set before the king at his coronation.

FOOD & WAR

1944: Moscow, Soviet Union, World War II

State Defence Committee Decree No. 5859ss *On the Crimean Tatars* was issued from the Kremlin. The directive ordered the banishment of the Crimean Tartars as punishment for their wartime collaboration with the German occupation authorities during the war. Some of the conditions set out in the decree determined the food allowances:

During the Patriotic War [World War II], many Crimean Tatars betrayed the Motherland. . . . All Tatars are to be banished from the territory of the Crimea and resettled permanently as special settlers in the regions of the Uzbek SSR. . . . The special settlers will be allowed to take with them personal items, clothing, household objects, dishes and utensils, and up to 500 kilograms of food per family. . . . Every month during the June-August 1944 period, equal quantities of flour, groats, and vegetables will . . . be distributed free of charge to the special settlers . . . as repayment for the agricultural production and livestock received from them in the areas from which they were evicted.

THE PICNIC BASKET

1914: England

The *Guardian* newspaper made some suggestions for a picnic basket.

The picnic basket

Catering for a summer outing

Though May has made a very bad start—particularly after the gracious behaviour of April—one may legitimately expect plenty of opportunities for outdoor excursions from now onwards; and (putting the memory of last week’s disastrous weather out of one’s head) the provisioning of such excursions becomes a timely subject of consideration.

The proper packing of the picnic basket is as essential as the provision of suitable viands, and the memory alone should not be regarded as sufficiently trustworthy when collecting the supply of eatables together. Make out a list of all that will be required, then look over it and mentally sum up the accessories to meats and sweets and the number of knives, forks, and spoons required, allowing nothing superfluous. Do not forget the corkscrews and a tin-opener. Have a good supply of thick paper dishes, such as are used by fruiterers. They are easily packed and can be used for undressed salads, pastries, or bread. Paper serviettes are better than damask ones. Sandwiches should be packed in cardboard boxes in grease-proof paper, butter should be in a covered jar, cream should be taken in a bottle. Devonshire cream keeps better in a tin lined with grease-proof paper. Salt is better in sprinklers, no spoons then being required. Pepper will not be necessary if a small bottle of cayenne is taken. A jar of French mustard might well take the place of the mustard pot, which is liable to be broken or to allow the escape of the mustard.

A chicken or veal galantine, a lobster salad, two or three dishes of sandwiches, a dish of ham, some sweets, with cheese, biscuits, and butter, make a very good selection for a picnic basket for six or eight people. Cold meat may always be added, or savouries, such as sardines or various foreign sausages.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769: Tahiti

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks:

“*Otahite*” Cocoa nuts were brought down so plentifully this morn that by ½ past 6 I had bought 350: this made it necessary to drop the price of them least so many being brought at once we should exhaust the countrey and want hereafter; notwithstanding I had before night bought more than a

thousand at the rates of 6 for an amber coloured bead, 10 for a white one, and 20 for a forty penny nail.

1817: Australia

From John Oxley's journal of his expedition in 1817 to explore the course of the Lachlan River: "Since the river has been swollen, the fish have eluded us, none having been caught since yesterday morning. Two black swans were however shot on the river."

1841: Australia

From the journal of Edward John Eyre (1815–1901) on an expedition into the inland of Central Australia:

Whilst here I gave Wylie free permission to eat as much as he could,—a privilege which he was not long in turning to account. Between last night's supper and this morning's breakfast he had got through six-and-a-half pounds of solid cooked flesh, weighed out and free from bone, and he then complained, that as he had so little water (the well had fallen in and he did not like the trouble of cleaning it out again), he could hardly eat at all. On an average he would consume nine pounds of meat per day. I used myself from two to three when undergoing very great exertions.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1668: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys. He had an altercation on this day with one of the orange sellers at a London theater.

To the Duke of York's playhouse and there saw *The Tempest*. . . . But there happened one thing which vexed me; which is, that the orange-woman did come in the pit and challenge me for twelve oranges which she delivered by my order at a late play last night, to give to some ladies in a box, which was wholly untrue, but yet she swore it to be true; but however I did deny it and did not pay her, but for quiet did by [buy] 4s. worth of oranges of her—at 6d. a piece.

1789: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde. Spring weather arrived late in this year, and in his entry for the day he bemoaned the lack of gooseberries—the traditional accompaniment to mackerel: “We had Maccarel to day for Dinner being the first we have seen any where this Season, 5^d. apiece, but the Spring is so very backward that here are no green gooseberries to eat with them nor will there be any for some time.”

May 12

DINING AT KINGS COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

1891: England

Oscar Browning, a fellow at King’s College, Oxford, wrote to Michael Sadler, steward of Christ Church, Cambridge, on this day, telling him of the new habit of a social luncheon rather than the old tradition of ordering “commons” to eat alone:

Our common luncheon in Hall is a great success. Things are ordered à la carte. The usual prices are Soup 6d., Fish or Entrée 6d., made dish 8d., Vegetables or salad 1d., Pudding 3d. Men order what they like but the whole style is simple. There is also a charge of 3d. for bread and waiting which is imposed on Fellows as well as Undergraduates and is charged to the Buttery account.

Members of College entertain out [of] College friends at luncheon. The luncheon is served at the tables used for dinner and the most delightful part of the arrangement is that Dons, Undergraduates & their friends all sit together and the conversation is quite general and I may say unrestrained.

Men still continue to give luncheon parties in their own rooms, but I imagine there is very little of that kind of entertainment. You must understand that undergraduates here are as a rule poor, and are simple in their habits of life. I do not expect a man to bring in more than two friends to luncheon at a time, although there is no rule.

Some men still lunch in their own rooms and are invited for the sake of

Some men still lunch in their rooms on bread and marmalade for the sake of economy, and some people I know find that the Hall is an occasion of expense. I think it saves me personally about £40 a year.

The common luncheon has certainly tended to increase the sociability of the College, but I must repeat that the general character of it is as I said before, extremely simple.

FOOD FIRSTS

1777: USA

The first advertisement for ice cream in the United States appeared in the *New York Gazette, and Weekly Mercury* on this day:

Philip Lenzi, Confectioner from London, Having removed from Dock-street to Hanover-Square, No. 517. Takes this method to return his sincere thanks to all his friends and customers for their past favours, and hopes for a continuance, and will have in this present season, a very great variety of the best sweetmeats; preserves marmelades, jellies, &c. in brandy, and very reasonable rate as the times will permit, for read money only; and every thing of the said branch will be executed to all perfection as in the first shops in London. Said Lenzi will, in the ensuing season, give a very good price for the very best sort of fruit, such as strawberries, gooseberries, cherries, raspberries, peaches, pine apples, green gages, apricots, &c. & c. May be had almost every day, ice cream; likewise ice for refreshing wine, &c. N.B. Wanted to said business, and apprentice—Premium is expected.

FOOD & WAR

1864: USA, Civil War

From the diary of Frances W. Wallace, wife of Confederate officer Philip Hugh Wallace: “Ladies have not called, quite cold today. Had a fine dinner, turkey, green peas, lettuce, sweet potatoes, sallad, etc, fare very good here. Walked out this evening—some very beautiful places. Phil will go to serenade some friends tonight.”

TO THE QUEEN'S TASTE

1534: England

Anne Boleyn was the second wife of King Henry VIII by this time. In April, Honor Grenville, Viscountess Lisle had sent her queen a gift of fresh dotterels (the queen's favorite fish) and a songbird in a cage—perhaps hoping to obtain royal appointments for her daughters. She received a letter written on this day, about the queen's pleasure at these gifts.

Letter from John Brown to Lady Lisle:

And how the Queen's Grace liked your present of dotterels and also your linnnet that hung in your chamber, please it to ye to understand that her Grace liked them both very well, the one for being a special good dish, the other for a pleasant singing bird.

Written at Greenwich the xij of the merry month of May.

By yours assuryd, John Brown.

And another friend also wrote:

The Queen did appoint six of your dotterels for her supper, six for Monday dinner, and six for supper. My Lord of Rochford presented them himself, and showed her how they were killed new at twelve of the clock in Dover, of the which she was glad, and spake many good words towards your ladyship's good report, as I was informed by them that stood by.

A GIANT PUDDING

1718: London, England

A giant pudding, which took fourteen days to boil, was offered to lucky Londoners on this day. The story was told by John Camden Hotten, in his *History of Signboards* (1866):

James Austin, "inventor of the Persian ink-powder," desiring to give his customers a substantial proof of his gratitude, invited them to the "Boar's

Head” to partake of an immense plum pudding—this pudding weighed 1,000 pounds—a baked pudding of one foot square, and the best piece of an ox roasted. The principal dish was put in the copper on Monday, May 12, at the “Red Lion Inn,” by the Mint, in Southwark, and had to boil fourteen days. From there it was to be brought to the “Swan Tavern,” in Fish Street Hill, accompanied by a band of music, playing “What lumps of pudding my mother gave me!” One of the instruments was a drum in proportion to the pudding, being 18 feet 2 inches in length, and 4 feet in diameter, which was drawn by “a device fixed on six asses.” Finally, the monstrous pudding was to be divided in St. George’s Fields; but apparently its smell was too much for the gluttony of the Londoners. The escort was routed, the pudding taken and devoured, and the whole ceremony brought to an end before Mr. Austin had a chance to regale his customers. Puddings seem to have been the forte of this Austin. Twelve or thirteen years before this last pudding he had baked one, for a wager, ten feet deep in the Thames, near Rotherhithe, by enclosing it in a great tin pan, and that in a sack of lime. It was taken up after about two hours and a half, and eaten with great relish, its only fault being that it was somewhat overdone. The bet was for more than £100.

TO PICKLE WALNUTS GREEN

1688: Pickled Walnuts

From a seventeenth-century household manuscript receipt book inscribed *Madam Susanna Avery, Her Book*:

May ye 12th, Anno Domini 1688.

To Pickel Wallnutts Green

Let your nutts be green as not to have any shell; then run a knitting pin two ways through them; then put them into as much ordinary vinegar as will cover them, and let them stand thirty days, shifting them every too days in ffrech vinegar; then ginger and black peper of each ounce, rochambole two ounces slised, a handfull of bay leaves; put all togeather cold; then wrap up every wall nutt singly in a vine leaf, and put them in putt them into [*sic*] the ffolloing pickel: for 200 of walnutts take two gallans of the best whit vineager, a pint of the best mustard seed, fore ounces of horse radish, with six lemons sliced with the rin(d)s on, cloves and mace half an ounce, a

stone jar, and put the pickel on them, and cork them close up; and they will be fitt for use in three months, and keep too years.

QUEEN VICTORIA SETS AN EXAMPLE

1847: Britain

In 1847, Arthur Hugh Clough wrote *A Consideration of Objections against the Retrenchment Association at Oxford during the Irish Famine in 1847*, in which he addressed various ethical issues triggered by the current high wheat prices (which made bread very dear,) and the potato blight, which was wreaking havoc in Ireland where it was a staple. He concluded his address with the following:

I may as well end by copying a document which shows that an example has been set for us in high places. It is an order issued by the Lord Steward of the Queen's household.

“Board of Green Cloth, 12th May, 1847.

Her Majesty taking into consideration the present high and increasing price of provisions, and especially of all kinds of bread and flour, has been graciously pleased to command that from the date of the order, no description of flour except seconds shall be used for any purpose in her Majesty's household; and that the daily allowance of bread shall be restricted to one pound per head for every person dieted in the palace.

By her Majesty's command, FORTESCUE.”

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1817: Australia

From John Oxley's journal of his expedition in 1817 to explore to course of the Lachlan River:

The fine weather still continues to favour us. The river rose in the course of the night upwards of a foot. It is a probable supposition that the natives, warned by experience of these dangerous flats, rather choose to seek a more precarious, but more safe subsistence in the mountainous and rocky ridges

which are occasionally to be met with. The river and lagoons abound with fish and fowl, and it is scarcely reasonable to suppose that the natives would not avail themselves of such store of food, if the danger of procuring it did not counterbalance the advantages they might otherwise derive from such abundance.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1667: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

Lords day. . . .but back to the coach to my wife, and she and I homeward again; and in our way bethought ourselves of going alone, she and I, to a French house to dinner, and so enquired out Monsieur Robins my periwig-maker, who keeps an ordinary, and in an ugly street in Covent garden did find him at the door, and so we in; and in a moment almost have the table covered, and clean glasses, and all in the French manner, and a mess of potage first and then a couple of *pigeons a l'esteuevee*, and then a piece of *bœuf-a-la-mode*, all exceedingly well seasoned and to our great liking; at least, it would have been anywhere else but in this bad street and in a periwig-makers house; but to see the pleasant and ready attendance that we had and all things so desirous to please and ingenious in the people, did take me mightily—our dinner cost us 6s.

An *ordinary* was an inn where meals were served.

1826: England

William Kitchiner, an eccentric physician and enthusiastic cook, was known to be fanatical about punctuality. On this day, he sent a note to William Brockedon, inviting him to dine with “The Committee of Taste”:

My dear Sir,

The Honor of Your Company is requested to dine with The Committee of Taste, on Monday May 22nd.

The Specimens will be placed upon the table at Half past Five o' Clock

precisely, when the Business of the Day will immediately commence.

I have the Honor to be,

Your most obedient Servant,

Wm. Kitchiner

Secretary

May 13

A BANQUET FOR MILITARY VETERANS

1934: Saint-Pol-sur-Ternoise, France

A banquet was held on this day for military veterans of the armies of land, sea, and air. The menu was:

Consommé tapioca

Tête de veau sauce vinaigrette

Gigot flageollete

Jambon d'York

Salade de saison

Fromage

Tarte Saint-Poloise

Corbeille de fruites

Desserte variée

Bière – Bordeaux

Bourgogne

Champagne

Café – Fine.

FOOD & WAR

1779: Bavaria, the Potato War Ends

The brief Bavarian Succession War between Frederick II of Prussia and Joseph II of Austria was formally ended at the Congress of Teschen on this day. Very little actual fighting took place during the conflict, which became known as “The Potato War” (*Kartoffellkrieg*). There are several theories as to why it got this name: supplies were short, and the Prussian troops spent most of their time foraging for potatoes, or it was ammunition that was short, so potatoes were used as missiles, or simply that much of it took place at potato harvest time.

1864: USA, Civil War

From the diary of Frances W. Wallace, wife of Confederate officer Philip Hugh Wallace:

We went early this morning to call on Mrs Byers. Mrs Cosby and Emma Byers had gone to attend Dr Johnson’s wedding. Mrs Byers gave us a pressing invitation to take tea and spend the evening with her but we declined. I wrote to Cousin John Jones today. This evening we walked out again. This is really a beautiful place, some beautiful yards. Strawberries are now plentiful. For dinner we had quite a variety of vegetables. Nothing like starvation here. There is nothing here that reminds us of the war, except the anxious hearts of Mothers and friends and the conversation of the gentlemen. Everything is quite, indeed all that is beautiful to the eye can be seen here; the place seems laden with flowers and the perfume of flowers.

1941: Britain, World War II

From the wartime diary of housewife Nella Last:

Tonight I was a bit tired perhaps, but I got *really* cross with my husband

and told him a few things for the good of his soul. Each week since the war, I've always steadily saved a tin or two of meat, fish or soup and jam, syrup *etc.* I was so dreadfully short in the last war—not only money but food—when I lived in the New Forest near Southampton. A little while back, my husband said, “How splendid of you!,” “How you must have planned and contrived!,” “What a sacrifice it must have been!,” and so on and so on. Now, when there is more than a chance that we will be bombed out, he *whines*, “If you had only had sense, and saved the money instead of getting a dozen tins of meat”—forgetting that he has never given me a sliding scale of housekeeping, and I've had to stretch and *stretch* it always. I find I'm “short-sighted” and a “silly hoarder” and that I may never use what I've saved, and so on.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

1725: London, England

At the proceedings at the Old Bailey on this day, thirty-three offenders were sentenced to transportation for their crimes. The punishments were extraordinarily severe for what amounts to petty theft today, as the court records show:

Mary Richardson, of S. James's Westminster, was indicted for breaking and entering the House of Matthew Spink, and taking thence 51 s. and an Earthen Tea-Pot, on the 4th of May. Guilty of Felony to the value of 4 s. 10 d. Transportation.

Jophenix Smith, of S. Giles's in the Fields, was indicted for stealing 12 lb. of Bacon, the Goods of Katharine Foulks, on the 9th of May. Guilty val. 10 d. Transportation.

FOOD FIRSTS

1806: USA

A definition of the word *cocktail*, with a political slant, appeared in the American magazine *The Balance and Columbian Repository*, published on this day in Hudson, New York.

Cocktail is a stimulating liquor, composed of spirits of any kind, sugar, water, and bitters—it is vulgarly called bittered sling and is supposed to be an excellent electioneering potion inasmuch as it renders the heart stout and bold, at the same time that it fuddles the head. It is said, also to be of great use to a democratic candidate: because a person, having swallowed a glass of it, is ready to swallow anything else.

The first known mention of the word is in the *Morning Post and Gazetteer*, in London, on March 20, 1798:

- Mr. Pitt,
- two petit vers of “L’huile de Venus”
- Ditto, one of “perfeit amour”
- Ditto, “cocktail” (vulgarly called ginger)

The first mention in America, as far as is known, is in *The Farmer’s Cabinet*, on April 28, 1893: “Drank a glass of cocktail—excellent for the head. . . . Call’d at the Doct’s. found Burnham—he looked very wise—drank another glass of cocktail.”

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1787: Australia

The ships of the “First Fleet,” under the command of Captain Arthur Phillip, set off to the new penal settlement on this day with a cargo of convicts and sufficient provisions to last the voyage and the initial period of settlement. The eleven ships, with a total capacity of only 4,000 tons, carried 1,487 people.

The provisions included 448 barrels of flour, 116 casks of dried pease, 110 firkins of butter (each slightly more than 40 liters), 5 casks of oatmeal, 50 puncheons (about 500 liters each) of “bread” (actually hard ships’ biscuit), 135 tierces (about 160 liters each) of salt beef, 165 tierces of salt pork, 3 hogsheads of vinegar, plus some rice, cheese, sago, raisins, and small amounts of sugar and spices. There was also livestock, crop seed, rum, brandy, and water. Supplies were supplemented and other useful crop samples and livestock were taken aboard at several ports of call.

aboard at several ports of call.

Rations for the marines were, per week: 4 lb salt beef, 2 lb salt pork, 2 pints pease, 7 lb ships bread, 3 lbs oatmeal, 12 oz cheese, 6 oz butter, half a pint of vinegar.

Convicts received two thirds of this, but no butter.

The rations were reduced or altered as necessary during the voyage.

May 14

MILITARY FOOD

1859: Britain

An article in *Chambers's Journal* on "The British Soldier—at Home" discussed the importance of food to the soldier:

Next we come to the important matter of *food*. At foreign stations, or in wartime, the dieting of soldiers is a most complicated and difficult matter; but we treat here only of soldiers quietly at home in barracks or fixed stations. Whether at home or abroad, a British soldier expects and receives more animal food than a continental soldier. A French soldier eats 2 ½ lbs. of bread per day, but adds to it very little solid meat; a British soldier will bear all sorts of privations patiently, save lack of food, and his dinner must include meat, or it is no dinner to him. At most of our barrack; camps, and garrisons, contractors supply the meat and bread, at prices agreed on between them and the government. Usually men of large capital take the contract, and sublet it to other persons.

In the French army, in peace-time, the government supply only bread, all the rest being purchased out of the soldier's pay; in England, meat as well as bread is supplied. The whole subject of the subsistence of troops is, however, much less understood in England than in France. The soldiers know little of cooking, and there is no one to teach them. They have their 1 lb. of bread and ¾ lb. of meat daily, and they have fuel and vessels for cooking; but the processes are wasteful and ill understood. Boiled meat is almost a universal diet with them, for hardly any arrangement has yet been

made for roasting or baking. Sometimes a few men will club together, and pay for having a joint of meat, with potatoes, baked at a neighbouring bakehouse; if they depend on the barrack facilities, they can scarcely get beyond boiled meat—too often, through bad management, hard and tasteless. They take it in turn to cook, by an arrangement among themselves; but they are sorry cooks at best. Each regiment or detachment receives its quota of meat and bread at a particular hour daily, and distributes to companies and squads. In every company, six women, with their children, are allowed to draw daily rations of bread and meat: these women must be wives of soldiers who have married with the consent of the commanding officer. The whole arrangement, it must be confessed, is a strange one. The soldier's shilling a day is lessened to sevenpence-halfpenny, as a means of paying for, or contributing towards the cost of, his daily ration of bread and meat; and out of this sevenpence-halfpenny, he must pay for whatever he desires to have in the form of vegetables, butter, cheese, condiments, puddings, tea, coffee, sugar, *etc.* Such of these things as are supplied by the government are debited to him at a low price; but still the system is strangely confused.

The Crimean war was valuable to us, in teaching many a lesson from which we are now gradually profiting. The food of the soldier is one of these. The authorities have it now under consideration wholly to remodel the barrack and camp dietary arrangements; giving to the soldier (not necessarily at greater cost to the nation) a better selected variety of food, better facilities for cooking it, and instructions in the art of cooking. The late M. Soyer supplied to the military authorities many useful hints as to the best mode of obtaining nutriment from a given amount of food; and Colonel Sir A. M. Tulloch—in a valuable document submitted by him in 1857 to the Commission of Inquiry into the Sanitary State of the Army—gave several schemes of dietary, which would greatly improve the soldier's food, without adding to his expenditure. The gallant colonel, whose indefatigable labours excited so much attention three or four years ago, estimated that a well-arranged dietary might be provided by an expenditure on the part of the soldier of only 2d. per day out of his 7 ½ d. in addition to the ration of bread and meat supplied to him. The variety and excellence of this dietary are surprising; but, says Mr Fonblanque, "the first step must be to instruct our soldiers in the rudiments of the art of cooking, of which they are now lamentably deficient." The camp at Aldershott is rendering useful service in this particular; Captain Grant has invented simple but efficacious cooking

apparatus, by which the men can bake their meat occasionally with speed and comfort.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1804: USA

The Lewis and Clark Expedition (1804–1806), was the first U.S. overland expedition to the Pacific coast and back. The group started up the Missouri River in three boats on May 14, 1804, overwintered in what is now North Dakota, and set off again in the spring.

The plan was to live off the land as much as possible, but as a precaution they took along seven tons of non-perishable supplies. These included 20 barrels of flour, 14 barrels of parched cornmeal, 7 barrels of flour, 1 keg of hog's lard, as well as 193 pounds of portable soup, and smaller quantities of sugar, beans, peas, coffee, candles, soap, and other items.

1806: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day Meriwether Lewis wrote: “Collins killed two bear this morning and was sent with two others in quest of the meat; . . . I taisted of this meat and found it much more tender than that which we had roasted or boiled, but the strong flavor of the pine distroyed it for my palate.”

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1809: USA

Thomas Jefferson wrote to Horatio G. Spafford on this day, and in the letter he considers the history of the potato:

SIR,—I have duly received your favor of April 3d, with the copy of your “General Geography,” for which I pray you to accept my thanks. . . . In page 186 you say the potatoe is a native of the United States. I presume you speak of the Irish potatoe. I have inquired much into the question, and think I can assure you that plant is not a native of North America. Zimmerman, in his “Geographical Zoology” says it is a native of Guinea and Chili—

his "Geographical Zoology," says it is a native of Guiana; and Clavigero, that the Mexicans got it from South America, its native country. The most probable account I have been able to collect is, that a vessel of Sir Walter Raleigh's, returning from Guiana, put into the west of Ireland in distress, having on board some potatoes which they called earth-apples. That the season of the year, and circumstance of their being already sprouted, induced them to give them all out there, and they were no more heard or thought of, till they had been spread considerably into that island, whence they were carried over into England, and therefore called the Irish potatoe. From England they came to the United States, bringing their name with them.

1837: London, England

William Tayler was a servant in the house of a rich Mayfair widow, and in his diary on this day he gave an account of the meals of those "upstairs":

For the parlour breakfast they have hot rolls, dry toast, a loaf of fancy bread and a loaf of common and a slice of butter. . . . [T]hey make their tea themselves. They have chocalate which is something like coffee but of a greasey and much richer nature. This is all they have for breakfast. . . .

Lunch is at one. . . . They generally have some cut from ours or have cold meat and some vegitibles. Dinner [is] at six which is considered very early. This day they had two soles fryed with saws [sauce], a leg of mutton, a dish of ox, pullets, potatows, brocolo, rice and a rhubarb tart, a tabiaca [tapioca] pudding, cheese and butter . . . tea at eight o'clock with bread and butter and dry toast, never any supper—its not fashionable.

May 15

LUNCH AT THE KREMLIN

1896: Russia

Tsar Alexander sat down to the following lunch menu at the Kremlin:

Crab Soup

Meat or Vegetable Pies

Finnish Trout

Spiced Veal

Cold Gelled Partridge

Small Plump Hens and Chickens

Artichokes with Peas Salad

Hot Sweets

Ice Cream

Dessert

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1973: USA

Nathaniel Wyeth, an American chemist and inventor for the Dupont Company, was granted Patent No. 3,733,309 for a “Process for Producing a Biaxially Oriented Thermoplastic Article.” The article was, in fact, a soda bottle made from PET (polyethylene terephthalate).

PET had been patented in 1941, but until Wyeth’s development, it had not been possible to make a plastic bottle strong enough to hold carbonated beverages without bursting.

The prototype was, in Wyeth’s words “a terrible-looking bottle,” but further developments resulted in the bottle we know today, which is lightweight but strong and resistant to shattering, and also recyclable.

THE BORDEAUX CLASSIFICATION

1855: France

The Exposition Universelle de Paris, instigated by Emperor Napoléon III, began on this day, and continued until October 31. The fair was planned to celebrate the progress of France over the one hundred years that had passed since the French Revolution. Naturally the wine industry played a large role during the event, and one of their projects has stood the test of time.

The Bordeaux Wine Brokers' Union, at the request of the Gironde Chamber of Commerce, developed a classification system to accompany the display of wine from Bordeaux. This classification system is still in use.

The Wines of Bordeaux give tone to the stomach, while leaving the mouth fresh and the head clear. More than one invalid abandoned by the doctors has been seen to drink the good old wine of Bordeaux and return to health.

Comments by members of the Jury judging Bordeaux wines submitted under the new 1855 classification at the 1855 World's Fair in Paris.

A BIRTHDAY CAKE FOR A SHIP

1942: USA

This day was the first anniversary of the commissioning of the *USS Washington*, and the men aboard decided to throw a birthday party. The *Cougar Scream* (the ship's weekly paper) described the event and gave the ingredients for the cake and the menu for the dinner.

Huge Cake Baked For Ship's First Birthday

Prefaced by remarks from the bridge over the loudspeaker by the Commanding Officer, Captain H.H.J. Benson, the ceremony of cutting a birthday cake in honor of the First Anniversary of the commissioning of the *Washington*, was held on board on Friday 15 May at 1530 in No.7 Mess Compartment. Commander A. Y. Ayrault, U.S.N., Executive Officer was in charge of the festivities which witnessed the Supply Officer, Commander M. M. Smith (SC) U.S. Navy cutting the first slice of cake.

The huge cake was beautifully decorated. Being cooked in our own bake shop, needless to say, it was pronounced extraordinarily tasty and was eaten to the last crumb.

The cake was a multi-layer yellow pound cake, shot through and covered with beautiful rainbow-hued icing. It was 45 inches long, 25 inches in width and 20 inches to the base of the single birthday candle.

The following is a list of the ingredients that went into the cake. Sugar 150 pounds, Butter 150 pounds, Flour 150 pounds, Eggs 60 dozen, Baking Powder 6 ounces, Corn Starch 9 pounds, Milk 3 gallons, Mace 1 ounce, Vanilla 3/4 quart, Powdered Sugar 225 pounds, 789 1/2 pounds total weight.

The cake was baked at night under the supervision of R.E. Newton, Jr, Chief Commissary Steward and the bakers were Lange, F.W., Bkr 2c, Wojtyniak, S. W., Bkr 2c and Durgan, H. J., Bkr 2c.

A picture of the cake was taken by Dr. T.J. Canty. The Victory motif was predominant, the sides being covered by “Vs” and the dots and dashes symbolizing Victory. The inscription “First Birthday” was written across the top and figures were iced, listing the number of miles the Washington has steamed during the year since she went into commission.

Birthday Dinner

The Commissary Department of the Washington never known to have consideration for the waist lines of the crew, produced the menu printed below for the Birthday Dinner on Friday. Mothers who have sons on board, upon reading the menu, probably will sent to the corner drug store for reducing tablets for themselves. Even thinking of a meal like this may add weight.

With every item perfectly cooked or tastefully prepared, the word that “holiday routine” would be observed was welcomed by all hands, for who would want to work after a meal like this?

Menu—Cream of Tomato Soup, Celery Stalks, Mixed Sweet Pickles, Assorted Olives, Southern Fried Chicken, Pork Sausage Age Dressing, Baked Sugar Cured Ham, Pineapple and Raisin Sauce, Boiled Pork Loin, Applesauce, Dressing, Creamed Whipped Potatoes, Glazed Carrots, Buttered Asparagus Tips, Steamed String Beans, Shirred Lettuce Salad,

Mayonnaise Dressing, Apples, Oranges, Apple Pie With Vanilla Ice Cream, Ship's Birthday Cake, Bread, Butter, Coffee.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1602: America

Captain Bartholomew Gosnold, one of the founders of the Virginia Colony, named Cape Cod on this day. His mate aboard the ship, Gabriel Archer, wrote:

The fifteenth day we had again sight of the land, which made ahead, being as we thought an island, by reason of a large sound that appeared westward between it and the main, for coming to the west end thereof, we did perceive a large opening, we called it Shoal Hope. Near this cape we came to fathom anchor in fifteen fathoms, where we took great store of codfish, for which we altered the name, and called it Cape Cod. Here we saw sculls of herring, mackerel, and other small fish, in great abundance. . . . The captain went here a shore and found the ground to be full of pease, strawberries, whortleberries, &c., as then unripe.

1841: Australia

From the journal of Edward John Eyre (1815–1901) on an expedition into the inland of Central Australia. Both Eyre and the aboriginal boy Wylie have both been ill from eating horseflesh, which was by this time far from fresh. They made very slow progress on this day.

We were both very hungry; and as we had suffered so much lately from eating the horse flesh, we indulged tonight in a piece of bread, and a spoonful of flour boiled into a paste, an extravagance which I knew we should have to make up for by and bye. I had dug for water, and procured it at a depth of five feet; but it was too brackish either to drink, or give to our horses; we used it, however, in boiling up our flour into paste.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1837: London, England

From the diary of William Tayler, a servant in the house of a rich Mayfair widow. He gives an account of his meals for the day: “Breakfast as usual, cold beef and potatoes for lunch. For dinner, fish and minced mutton with poached eggs, curry, which is a kind of hot Indian dish, potatoes, rice, greens, cheese and butter, beer, sherry and port.”

May 16

SAINT HONORÉ’S DAY

Saint Honoré is the patron saint of pastry cooks. The well-known French *Gateau de Saint Honoré* is named in his honor. The cake consists of a *choux* pastry base with a filling of a light *crème pâtissière*, and is topped with small *choux* paste balls. The style of cake is attributed to a famous mid-nineteenth century pastry cook called Chiboust (although he did not invent *choux* pastry).

SAINT ISIDORE’S DAY

Isidore (or Isidro) is the patron saint of plough-pulling animals and is particularly popular in the Philippines where the water buffalo is honored on this day. The animals are blessed, and then a feast follows. Every house features a *pahiya*, which is an arrangement of coconut, sugar cane, pineapple, banana, cookies, and candies made of steamed, tinted, and hardened rice shaped like leaves. At the end of the day, the food is given away for good luck.

BUSHMEAT

1999: England

The *Sunday Times* published an article about the bushmeat trade in Africa.

Some of Man’s closest relatives are being cooked for dining tables in Brussels even though two years ago the European Union declared that it would crack down on the illegal trade in what is known as “bushmeat.”

Great apes, some of which differ from humans in only 2% of their genetic make-up, are also on the menu in Antwerp and other large cities, according to sources in the restaurant trade.

. . . [I]n the Etaings Noir district of Brussels, the waitress did not hesitate when an undercover reporter asked whether monkey meat was available. “Yes, we have it,” she said. . . . The stew was not eaten but sent for analysis last week at the veterinary department at Ghent University. Tests confirmed that it came from a primate and that it contained bones from the elbow and forearm. Hunters had shot the animal: four lead pellets were lodged in the muscle and bone. . . . At another restaurant in the backstreets, a waiter showed the menu to a reporter and his companion and said: “We also have other dishes: the chimpanzee is very tasty, if you like that type of thing.”

Eating chimpanzee or monkey is a sign of status among the black community and reminds expatriates of home. One Nigerian man said: “Some people from eastern Africa would not live here if they could not get the meat.” Favoured recipes include cooking monkey in white wine or with peanut sauce.

. . . After steep declines in their numbers, all apes are protected by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (Cites), and any trade in higher primates, such as chimpanzees, is banned. The chimp population in Africa has collapsed by more than 90% this century and is now estimated to be less than 130,000.

But chimpanzees are not safe from the trade in bushmeat. Last month, after a tipoff, armed police and health officials raided 12 African food shops in the Matongé area of Brussels. They were checking hygiene standards and tax evasion but found far worse: in one shop two dead chimpanzees were hanging from the ceiling in a store room. They had been skinned, gutted, dried and salted. . . . The Congolese woman who ran the shop was unabashed. “We had antelopes, porcupines and snakeskins and monkey meat,” she said. Two chimps were on the premises, she admitted, but were not for sale. “It is something we want to eat with our family for special occasions.”

Demand by European residents and the activities of Western companies in Africa is expanding the illegal trade, according to environmental groups.

. . . The scandal presents deadly risks to the health of humans as well as our evolutionary cousins. Two years ago the eating of chimpanzee meat in Gabon was blamed for an outbreak of ebola, the highly infectious fever.

More than 20 people died.

VEGETARIAN NEWS

1850: USA

The American Vegetarian Society had its first meeting in New York on this day. About thirty members (including Sylvester Graham) resolved that eating meat was a sign of man's fallen condition and that a vegetarian diet was the first step toward a "return to paradise and purity." The *New York Herald* noted that one member had urged, "Yes, put the bread in the middle of the table, not the mangled corpses of murdered animals," but the reporter clearly believed that the movement would not attract too many adherents as he ended his story with the words "The butchers can renew the leases of their market stalls, for one year more, with safety."

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1806: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806:

Sahcargarweah [the wife of their guide and interpreter] gathered a quantity of the roots of a species of fennel which we found very agreeable food, the flavor of this root is not unlike annis seed, and they dispell the wind which the roots called Cows and quawmash are apt to create particularly the latter.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1779: France

The infamous Marquis de Sade (1740–1814) spent a total of over thirty years in various prisons and insane asylums. He was known to love good food, and on this day while imprisoned in Vincennes, he wrote to his wife about the cookies and cake she had sent:

[T]he little cookies are as always excellent, and 'twill be quite some time

before I tire of them: please keep sending them and feel free to increase the quantity. . . . The sponge cake is not at all what I asked for: 1) I wanted it iced everywhere, both on top and underneath, with the same icing used on the little cookies; 2) I wanted it to be chocolate inside, of which it contains not the slightest hint; they have colored it with some sort of dark herb, but there is not what one would call the slightest suspicion of chocolate.

1781: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde:

We had the best day of Fishing we ever had. We caught at one draught only ten full Pails of Fish, Pike, Trout and flat fish. The largest Fish we caught was a Pike, which was a yard long and [weighed] upwards of thirteen pounds after he was brought home (*See next day*)

1800: England

From the *Grasmere Journals* of Dorothy Wordsworth: “I finished my letter to M.H. Ate hasty pudding and went to bed.”

Hasty pudding is the name given to a mush or porridge of grain. In Britain the base was often oatmeal or wheat flour, while in America it was more commonly cornmeal. It was particularly useful as a staple in the absence of ovens for baking bread.

As its name suggests, hasty pudding was quickly made from one major ingredient, and required little in the way of equipment. The basic mixture could, of course, be varied in an almost infinite number of ways, depending on the circumstances and ingredients available.

In *The Art of Cookery, Made Plain and Easy* (London, 1774) Hannah Glasse gives several versions of hasty pudding made with oatmeal or flour.

To Make an Oatmeal Hasty Pudding

Take a quart of water, set it on to boil, put in a piece of butter and some salt; when it boils, stir in the oatmeal as you do the flour, till it is of a good thickness. Let it boil a few minutes, pour it into your dish, and stick pieces

of butter in it: or put with wine and sugar, or ale and sugar, or cream, or new mil. This is best made with Scotch oatmeal.

May 17

KUROKI DINNER

1907: New York, USA

A grand dinner organized by New York's Japan Society was held at the Hotel Astor on this night. The dinner was in honor of the visiting naval dignitaries and veterans of the Russo-Japanese War, Vice Admiral Ijuin Gorô and General Baron Kuroki Tamemoto. The *New York Times* reported the event in detail, and included the menu of the dinner.

Nations Join Hands at Kuroki Dinner

Admiral Dewey Presides

The dinner given . . . by a number of prominent Americans to Viscount S. Aoki, Japanese Ambassador, Baron T. Kuroki and his staff, Vice Admiral G. Ijuin and the officers of his ships, the *Tsukuba* and *Chitose*, resolved itself into a sort of peace feast, at which the representatives of the United States and of Japan vied with each other in picturing the benefits of peace over war.

This was the menu for the dinner:

- Shinnecock Bay Clams
- Clear Green Turtle
- Olives, Celery, Radishes, Salted Almonds
- Brook Trout a la Meuniere
- Croquettes de Pommes de Terre
- Medaillons de Boeuf aux Fresh Mushrooms

- Tomatoes Farcies Timbales of rice
- Sweetbreads piques glaces with Green Peas
- Sorbet Regence
- Roast Royal Squabs au Cresson
- Asparagus Tips en Salade
- Ice Cream, Petit Fours, Assorted Fruit
- Café Noir, Cigars, Astor Cigarettes
- *Vins*
- Amontillado, Chateau Doisy Barsac, Pontet
- Canet
- Moet et Chandon White Seal
- Apollinaris

FOOD & WAR

1864: USA, Civil War

From the diary of Frances W. Wallace, wife of Confederate officer Philip Hugh Wallace:

Tuskegee, Alabama. We went about 8:30 to Captain Conley's. Much to my surprise ladies dressed in evening costume came in, some extravagantly dressed, and many glittered in their diamonds. The Mrs. Balfours looked quite Parisian in their style. Miss Dargin, the senator's daughter, was decidedly an elegant girl; very intellectual and played finely on the piano. The young people danced and Mally, Phil and I sang, Phil's music created quite a sensation. Mrs Conley was very polite in her attentions. At 1 o'clock we walked into supper and to our surprise was a most beautiful table, the center ornamented with a pyramid of flowers in a silver stand, five stands in

height and tastefully arranged; the cake was beautifully iced, three varieties, fruit, teacake and pound, calf's foot jelly, turkey, chicken salad, ham, delicious tea, contents of the table; and this is the starvation in the South! Nowhere in the South could you find more style, perhaps a greater variety, but nothing more; for wealth, style, beauty and taste no place can surpass it, and this in the house of a refugee from Mississippi who claims to be only camping, having collected what little furniture she could find for temporary use. If this be a poor dying struggle, Oh! beautiful South, you are glamorous even in your death. We returned about 2 o'clock. Most of the company there were refugees from different states; Dr Withers and his interesting daughter from Kentucky. Gus Givens left us at 10 o'clock, took stage and has gone to Savannah. Captain Cummings sent us a bowl of fine strawberries with sugar, cake and cream to eat with them. We prepared them and then had quite a little party to eat them in the parlor. Walked out to look at a house.

1900: South Africa, Boer War

The siege of Mafeking was relieved on May 17, after 217 days. The garrison commander, Lieutenant-Colonel Baden-Powell (who later went on to found the Scouting movement) discussed the food situation during the siege in *Lessons from the Varsity of Life*, published in 1933.

[W]e learned to economise very rigidly in the matter of food, and also to devise food substitutes. When a horse was killed. . . . His skin, after having the hair scalded off, was boiled with his head and feet for many hours, chopped up small, and with the addition of a little saltpetre was served out as "brawn." His flesh was taken from the bones and minced in a great mincing machine and from his inside were made skins into which the meat was crammed and each man received a sausage as his ration. The bones were then boiled into a rich soup, which was dealt out at the different soup kitchens; and they were afterwards pounded up into powder with which to adulterate the flour. So there was not much of that horse that was wasted. Our flour was made from the horses' oats, pounded and winnowed. But with all our appliances we never succeeded in getting completely rid of the husks. We managed thus, however, to issue every man daily a big biscuit of oatmeal. The husks of the oats were put to soak in large tubs of water for a number of hours, at the end of which the scum formed by the husks was

scraped off and given as food to the hospital chickens, while the residue formed a paste closely akin the that used by bill-stickers. This was called sowens, a sour kind of mess, but very healthy and filling. . . . Amongst other things we supplied for the invalids in hospital a special blancmange which was made from the *Poudre de Riz* from the hairdressers and chemists shops.

ICE CREAM

1784: USA

George Washington's cash memorandum book includes mention of payment of one pound, thirteen shillings and four pence for "a cream machine for ice"—in other words, an ice cream churn.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

1994: USA

The FLAVR SAVR™ tomato was the first genetically engineered food product to receive U.S. Food and Drug Administration approval as being suitable for human consumption.

The Food and Drug Administration today announced that FLAVR SAVR, a new tomato developed through biotechnology, is as safe as tomatoes bred by conventional means. This is the first time FDA has evaluated a whole food produced by biotechnology, a science that can make plant improvements with more precision than traditional cross-breeding.

The approval included the decision that "there is no safety or usage concern to which consumers of FLAVR SAVR™ tomatoes must be alerted by special labelling."

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1806: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day, Meriwether Lewis wrote: "[A]s the

bear are rather ferocious and we are obliged to depend on them principally for our subsistence we thought it most advisable to direct at least two hunters to go together, and they accordingly paired themselves out for this purpose.”

JOURNAL & LETTERS

1781: England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde. He gave a dinner party on this day at which he served an enormous pike caught in his own pond.

I gave my Company for dinner my great Pike which was roasted and a Pudding in his Belly, some boiled Trout, Perch, and Tench, Eel and Gudgeon fried, a Neck of Mutton boiled and a plain Pudding for Mrs Howes. All my Company were quite astonished at the sight of the great Pike on the table. Was obliged to lay him on two of the largest dishes, and was laid on part of the Kitchen Window shutters, covered with a cloth. I never saw a nobler fish at any table, it was very well cooked, and tho' as large was declared by all the Company to be prodigious fine eating, being so moist.

1799: England

Jane Austen wrote to her sister Cassandra:

13, Queen's Square. Our journey yesterday went off exceedingly well; . . . At Devizes we had comfortable rooms and a good dinner, to which we sat down about five; amongst other things we had asparagus and a lobster, which made me wish for you, and some cheesecakes, on which the children made so delightful a supper as to endear the town of Devizes to them for a long time.

May 18

FAST FOOD

1955: London, England

The fast-food revolution began in Britain with the opening of the first *Wimpy Bar* at Lyons Corner House, London. An American hamburger chain with the same name had started in Chicago in the 1930s, with the name being taken from the hamburger-loving character in the Popeye cartoon strip.

Wimpy's favorite line, "I'll gladly you pay you Tuesday for a hamburger today," became a byword among the younger set of the day.

FOOD & THE LAW

1997: Alaska, USA

The Alaska Food Code became effective on this day. Among the regulations was a prohibition on serving in food establishments, "under any circumstances," the following:

Fox meat or organs, polar bear meat or liver, bear meat or walrus meat, fermented meat, such as beaver tail, whale flipper, and seal flipper, fermented *muktuk*, and fermented seafood products, such as salmon eggs or fish, seal oil or whale oil, with or without meat.

ANNIVERSARY

1846: Russia & England

Peter Carl Fabergé was born in St. Petersburg. Fabergé was a jeweller who became famous for his exquisite jewel-encrusted eggs. He was especially honored at Claridge's Hotel in London in 1998, during the hotel's centenary celebrations. As part of the celebrations, the hotel offered a series of dinners called *A Taste of History* at which guests enjoyed dishes served at historic banquets held at the hotel.

Chef Williams, the first English chef to be appointed by Claridge's, had created a dish inspired by the beauty of Fabergé's eggs, which was included in the series of banquets. The dish consisted of a light lobster mousseline stuffed with a quail's egg and garnished with a mosaic of macaroni and truffle, served on a nest of celeriac.

RAILWAY FOOD

1937: USA

It was the maiden run of the Santa Fe railroad's new first class *Super Chief* service between Chicago and Los Angeles on this day. Passengers could dine in the thirty-six seat *Cochise* dining cars where trained chefs turned out dishes such as Sirloin Steak for Two (\$2.75), Swordfish Steak Saute (75 cents), Poached Tranche of Salmon (70 cents), and Old Fashion Boneless Chicken Pie (85 cents).

COFFEE

1573: Middle East

Leonhard Raewolf, a Bavarian physician and botanist, set off with his friend Frederick Rentzen on a journey through Tripoli, Aleppo, Raqqa, Bagdad, and Jerusalem on this day. He returned three years later.

Raewolf's journal entries on the use of sugar cane and coffee in the Middle East are amongst the earliest descriptions of these foods by a European.

The Turks and Moors cut off one piece (of sugar) after another and so chew and eat them openly everywhere in the street without shame. . . . [I]n this way (they) accustom themselves to gluttony and are no longer the intrepid fighters they had formerly been.

A very good drink they call Chaube that is almost as black as ink and very good in illness, especially of the stomach. This they drink in the morning early in the open places before everybody, without any fear or regard, out of clay or China cups, as hot as they can, sipping it a little at a time.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769: Tahiti

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks: "'*Otahite*' Fine weather and good market, the apples begin now to be ripe and are brought in in large quantities very cheap so that apple pies are a standing dish with us."

1841: Australia

From the journal of Edward John Eyre (1815–1901) on an expedition into the inland of Central Australia:

Having seen some kangaroos near our camp I sent Wylie with the rifle to try and get one. . . . [H]e commenced by eating a pound and a half of horseflesh, and a little bread; he then ate the entrails, paunch, lever, lights, tail, and two hind legs of the young kangaroo; next followed a penguin that he had found dead upon the beach; upon this he forced down the hide of the kangaroo after singeing the hair off, and wound up this meal by swallowing the tough skin of the penguin. He then made a little fire and laid down to sleep and dream of the pleasures of eating, nor do I think he was ever happier in his life than at that moment.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1778: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde:

This morning I had my great Pond drawn to show Mr. Pounsett and Jenny some diversion. And we had the largest Pike we caught for dinner and it weighed 7 Pounds. Mr. Pounsett and Jenny said they never eat so fine a Fish in all their lives—it was prodigious nice indeed.

1779: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde. He entertained some friends at dinner on this day.

Mr Howes and Wife and Mrs Davey, Mr Bodham and his Brother, and Mr du Quesne all dined and spent the afternoon and part of the evening with us today. I gave them for dinner a dish of Maccarel, 3 young Chicken boiled and some Bacon, a neck of Pork roasted and a Gooseberry Pye hot. We laughed immoderately after dinner on Mrs Howe's being sent to Coventry by us for an Hour. What with laughing and eating hot Gooseberry Pye brought on me the Hickupps with a violent pain in my stomach which lasted until I went to bed

lasted until I went to bed.

1918: China

Frank N. Meyer worked for the United States Department of Agriculture’s Plant Introduction Station in Santa Ana, California (see **September 8**). He mysteriously disappeared while traveling down the Yangtze River on this day, sometime after writing the following journal entry:

Hankow: Concerning Dr. McCollum’s idea that leafy green vegetables are essential in the human diet, well, this is a mooted question. The Russians at large use but few leafy herbs, and thousands of cowboys, especially in the Argentine, live on an almost pure meat diet. Of all of the leafy greens the Chinese love especially those belonging to the cabbage and mustard group; it seems that the race has found out that they supply some essential factors.

May 19

THE GOLDSMITHS’ DINNER

1444: London, England

May 19 is the feast day of Saint Dunstan, the patron saint of goldsmiths and therefore the traditional day for their annual election and feast. The expense sheet for the day shows the foods and beverages purchased for the feast in 1444.

	£	s	d
To minstrels	1	6	8
Their hoods and dinner	0	12	8
18 lb. of spices	1	1	0

200 pepyns [pippins]	0 1 8
400 blanderett	0 3 8
16 gallons of wine	0 18 8
Bread	0 9 4
Ale	0 9 8
1 hogshead of wine	1 16 4
Keeping of the cupboard	0 0 8
Hire of earthen pots	0 0 4
3 pikes and a jowl of fresh salmon	0 7 8
5 lampreys and 2 green fishes	0 10 8
For vij crabbys [crabs]	0 0 7
10 roches	0 0 6
1 potel wine, to the cooks	0 0 7
1 quart coles [coals]	

Washing of napery	00 7
Fro white cupps	00 9
For making clean the hall	00 2

A PAPAL BANQUET

1342: Avignon, France

Clement VI was crowned as pope on this day.

The banquet following the coronation ceremony was held in the Dominican convent at Avignon, and three thousand guests were in attendance. Clement VI's love of the good life, including fine food at banquets to which women were invited, hardly befitted the usual assumptions of his role, but the papal position in those times was often a political rather than a religious appointment.

The status of the Pope as being above all others was demonstrated in a number of symbolic ways at the banquet. He sat alone, at the highest table, waited upon by the highest-ranking noblemen—including the Dauphin of France. It was typical at medieval banquets for the seating arrangements to be strictly hierarchical, the lower orders further from the high table. The bill of fare offered at each table also reflected the status of the guests. At this banquet, Pope Clement was the only person to be served a special sweet mustard, and the lower tables received the less expensive and exotic fruits.

The complete bill of fare for the feast is not known, but the following provision list gives some idea of the scale of the event: 118 cattle, 1,023 sheep, 101 calves, 914 kids, 60 pigs, 6,900kg of lard, 1,500 capons, 3,043 hens, 7,428 chickens, 1,195 geese, 50,000 pies, 600kg of almonds, 200kg of sugar, 39,980 eggs, and 95,000 9 ounce breads.

FOOD & WAR

1855: Crimean War

The Irish reporter William Howard Russell wrote a letter to his editor, John Delane, at the *Times* about the famous chef Alexis Soyer:

Soyer is here (*ie Sebastopol*) eating whatever he can get and obstinately deaf to all hints that he ought to come in time to cook the dinner. Miss Nightingale is very ill, poor soul. Soyer dragged her into a battery—the mortar battery out of fire—and put her on the stern of a gun with the elegant expression meant to be neat and well-turned —“Voila! The Child of Peace had her breech on the breech of the Son of War!”

FOOD & THE LAW

1662: England

The Hearth Tax was imposed as of this day. It was also known as hearth money, chimney tax, or chimney money. It was essentially a revenue-raising exercise to support the newly restored Royal Household of King Charles II, which required £1,200,000 annually.

A new tax was needed, and it was easier to count hearths than individuals. One shilling per fire-hearth or stove in all buildings was to be paid at Michaelmas (September 29) and on Lady Day (March 25). The original act seemed fair in that those with bigger houses should pay more, but it did not clarify whether tenants or owners were responsible, and there were no exemptions. Subsequent amendments addressed these points, but the tax remained highly unpopular.

SUGAR

1741: Sweden

Sugar refining was a large-scale industry in Sweden in the mid-eighteenth century. In Norrköping alone there were three sugar refineries in the 1740s. On May 19, 1741, the great Swedish naturalist Carl Linnaeus visited the sugar factory of Alderman Lindstedt at Norrköping where he witnessed the refining process.

Here the coarse and unrefined raw sugar was pulverized and boiled in

Here the coarse and unrefined raw sugar was pulverized and boiled in water, diluted with limewater, mixed with ox blood or egg white, skimmed and poured into inverted cone-shaped moulds, perforated at the tip; from these a syrup trickled down into a bottle; this was repeated, and then the mould was covered with a white, dough-like French clay like a lid. It is strange that there should be no such clay in Sweden, but it has to be imported.

FOOD FIRSTS

1657: London, England

The first newspaper advertisement for coffee appeared inside the *Publick Adviser* of the week of May 19–26.

In Bartholomew Lane on the back side of the Old Exchange, the drink called Coffee, which is a very wholesom and Physical drink, having many excellent vertues, closes the Orifice of the Stomack, fortifies the heat within, helpeth Digestion, quickneth the Spirits, maketh the heart lightsom, is good against Eye-sores, Coughs, or Colds, Rhumes, Consumptions, Headach, Dropsie, Gout, Scurvy, Kings Evil, and many others is to be sold both in the morning, and at three of the clock in the afternoon.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1944: Tibet

Heinrich Harrer, author of *Seven Years in Tibet*, and his companion reached their first Tibetan village. They had been on the run for a year, and on this day were very hungry.

It was pitch dark before they handed to us for a shamelessly high price the oldest billy goat they could put their hands on. We knew we were being blackmailed, but we put up with it, as we wished to win the hospitality of this country. We slaughtered the goat in a stable and it was not till midnight that we fell to on the half-cooked meat.

May 20

FOOD FOR THE POOR

1729: England

The minutes of a meeting of the Brandon-Ferry parish on this day recorded the bill of fare for the inmates of the local workhouse.

	Morning	Noon	Night
Sunday	Bread and cheek	Beef	Bread and cheese
Monday	Beef broth	Pease Porridge "	
Tuesday	Milk broth	Beef	"
Wednesday	Beef broth	Hasty Pudding "	
Thursday	Bread and cheek	Pease porridge "	
Friday	Milk broth	Neat's Heart	"
Saturday	Beef broth	Pease broth	"

FOOD FOR A BALLOON FLIGHT

1785: England

The Rev. Thomas Warton made a balloon flight from Christ-Church Meadow, Oxford, "for the purpose of composing a sublime Ode in honour of his Majesty's Birthday" (King George III, whose birthday was June 4).

My provisions principally consisted of a small pot of stewed prunes, and half of a plain diet-bread cake, both prepared and kindly presented to me by the same ingenious hand which had fabricated the Balloon [his friend, the Pastrycook James Sadler]—I had also a small subsidiary stock, viz. a loaf a loaf of Sandwiches, three bottles of old ale, a pint of brandy, a sallad ready mixed, a roll of collared eel, a cold goose, six damson tartlets, a few china oranges, and a roasted pig of the Chinese breed; together with a small light barometer, and proper store of writing utensils, but no note, memorandum, nor loose hint of any kind. So help me.

FOOD TO CROSS THE ATLANTIC

1932

Amelia Earhart set off on the morning of this day from Harbour Grace, Newfoundland, on her attempt to be the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic. Fourteen hours and fifty-six minutes later she landed in a field in Ireland. Her provisions for the entire trip consisted of a thermos of soup and a can of tomato juice.

FOOD & WAR

1862: USA, Civil War

George Geer was a fireman aboard U.S. Steamer *Monitor*, at this time stationed on the James River near present-day Hopewell, Virginia, on blockade duty. He wrote a lengthy letter to his wife on this day, describing the food aboard, and giving a recipe for “Duff.”

Dear Wife,

I told you I would write you how we Live, and what we eat, so I will give you a little sketch in this. . . . At seven oclock—as we on ship call it, Six Bells—the Boatswains Whistle is sounded for Grog and Breakfast, which consist of a Pot of Coffee and hard crackers, such as I gave you a sample [of] on the North Carolina. But our mess is more fortunate than some: we have an Iron Sauce Pan that will hold some three or four Gallons. Our Cook takes these crackers and breaks them up, puts some fat Pork in it (which we

takes those crackers and breaks them up, puts some fat Fork in it (which we have plenty, as its so fat no one can eat it), puts salt and Pepper in, and cooks it untill the crackers are soft, and that makes us what we hungry men call a good Breakfast, but what I should hardly eat if I were home.

. . . At twelve the whistle sounds again and Grog and Dinner is the order. . .
. The Grog is whiskey, and they give a Gil cup twice each day, . . . For Dinner on Sunday we have Rost Beef put up in cans and preserved Potatoes. The Potatoes taste like I don't know what—any thing that has no taste at all—and the Beef is all parts of the Cow cooked to gather untill it is next to a Jelly and will drop to Pieces. It is good where there is none better. . . . I will not discribe any Pies or Puddings, as we are not troubled with any Desert. We have nothing to drink, or any thing to drink out of . . . until five, when supper is Piped, and such a supper. I am sure I will get the Gout on such high living. Our Supper consists of Tea and Crackers. The Tea is made by taking, for twelve of us, about three times as much Black Tea or Grass as you would take to make a cup of Tea for you and me, and about a tea cup full of that muscovada shugar that has such a bad taste; you recollect I got some once and we could hardly use it. Wall, it is put in the mess kettle and Boiling Water put on it twenty moments before we want to drink it, and we are served out [of] a tin Pot full and can eat as many crackers as we may wish, which for me is usuly one.

The supper is the same every night, with the addition of Butter on Tuesday and Thursday and Pickles Wednesday and Friday, but I cannot see the use of Butter quite so strong. We are none of us weak, but perhaps the Government is fearful we will get so, or it may be that they get strong Butter to go with these Strong Crackers. Each man has his own Crockery, which consists of a Tin Pot Pan and Spoon. Geo. S. Geer is a little more aristocratic, and has a Knife & Fork, which every body uses and I hardly know how we get along with out them.

On Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays we have Been Soupe, or perhaps a better name would be to call it Bean Water. I am often tempted to strip off my shirt and make a dive and see if there really is Beens in the Bottom that gives it the flavor. I think there must be, but I seldom see them. But the Government say Beens are very Wholesom and strengthning. I am of the same opinion (in a home).

The Pork, as I told you before, is of the Lardy kind, and no body pretends to

eat it. It is used for making the Skouse, as we call our Breakfast dish, and the balance is given to the Fishes.

On Tuesdays and Fridays we have a dish called Duff. I will give you the recpt [recipe], and you can try it. Take ½ lb. Flour to each person and wet it all untill it is a thick paste, then put in one ounce of Dride Apples to each person—cores and dirt—without cutting them up or Washing them, then put them in a Bag over night and Boil them in the morning until it is about half done through. Then cut it up with a knife so as to make it as heavy as poseable, and put a spoon full of common Molasses on each mans piece and you have one of our crack Duffs. You must not put any yeast or any such stuf in it, or you will be shure to spoil the flavor and you will not receive half the good from it as it will be apt to work out your stomach in the course of time, and this Duff is waranted to stay and the Apples have so much the taste of Plums.

THE SOY BEAN

1855: USA

One of the earliest written references in English to the domestic cultivation and cookery of the soy bean (called the Japan Pea) occurs in correspondence with the Commissioner of Patents:

I planted twenty three of the Japan peas I received from the Patent Office, of which number eighteen grew. They were cultiavetd in my garden, on the 20th of May, and ripened say, from the 15th of August to the 15th of September. . . . I had some of them cooked, while green, at their largest size, and found them delicious.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1884: USA

An African American inventor, Lockrum Blue of Washington, DC, was granted Patent No. 298,937 for a “Hand Corn-Shelling Device” that would “rapidly and effectually removing the grain from ears of corn.”

The device consisted of an oblong blade which could be screwed to a bench “filn

The device consisted of an oblong blade which could be screwed to a bench in such a manner as to allow its concaved end to project outward therefrom, and then to sit astride of the bench as represented in Fig. 1, although it will be obvious that it can be used in many ways different from this.”

1930: USA

Clarence Birdseye, of Gloucester, Massachusetts, was granted Patent No. 1,759,682 for a “Method of Preparing Consumer Packages.”

My invention is concerned with the important and difficult problems of packaging in unit quantities fresh perishable food products, for example, as fish, meat, fruit or vegetables, without loss of the essential characteristics of the fresh foodstuff, protecting it against dessication and deterioration . . . and adapting it to to be transported, stored, and distributed to the consumer without impairment in any of these particulars. . . . My invention may be practiced most advantageously when it includes as one characteristic step the quick-freezing of the product.

1958: USA

David D. Peebles was granted Patent No. 2835586 for “Dried Milk Product and Method of Making Same.” Dried milk had been around for a long time but Peebles’s method produced a much more quickly dissolving or “instant” milk powder. As he explained, “In general it is an object of the present invention to provide a method which will produce a lacteal powder characterised by its ability to be readily and quickly re-dispersed in water without vigorous agitation to form a stable reconstituted milk.”

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1668: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys: “[A]nd so down to the Wheyhouse and drank some and eat some curds, which did by and by make my belly ake mightily.”

1789: Britain

From the diary of John Damp, 5th Viscount Torrington, written during his

FROM THE DIARIES OF JOHN BYNG, EARL VISCOUNT TORRINGTON, WRITTEN DURING HIS HORSEBACK TOURS OF ENGLAND AND WALES:

Wellwyn, May 20th 1789.

Wellwyn: I continued my slow, and pleasant Route, to near Wellwyn, when another Storm hinted to me the White Swan; (for it is as convenient in travelling to know the Stops of the Road, as in Hunting, The Covers, and the right Points.) Mrs S. Talk'd about Mutton chops; but I stuck to my demand of cold meat, with a goosebery tart; and was right, for she instantly produced a cold Tongue, and a cold Fillet of Veal: as for her fusty old tart of last years fruit, I open'd the Lid, and closed it tightly down for the next Comer.

May 21

AN IMITATION DINNER

1905: USA

The *New York Times* described in detail, and not without some wit, a meatless dinner held on this day for delegates to the National Tuberculosis Convention in Washington:

The “meatless dinner” given by a so-called social leader to some distinguished delegates to the National Tuberculosis Convention in Washington the other evening was furnished with a menu not wholly devoid of blame, we think, with respect to its nomenclature, but on that account stimulating to the imagination if not to the palate. Here is the terminology of the feast:

Fruit Soup.

Imitation Salmon. Sauce Hollandaise.

Cucumbers.

Unfermented Concord Grape Juice, mixed with Apollinaris.

Broiled Slices Pine-nut Protoco. Nut Sauce.

Broiled Slices Fillet of Sole, Nut Sauce.

Artichoke Cups and Asparagus.

Unfermented Catawba Wine.

Eggs à la Villere. Mushrooms.

C.C. Protose Timbale, Tomato Sauce.

Grape Fruit and Cherry Salad. Cheese Soufflée.

Fruit Frappé. Kellogg Gelatine.

Imitation Coffee.

From these suggestions of good things anathema how the guests' mouths may have been fixed for soup built of "stock," live salmon trembling from their icy packaging to the pan, broiled partridge in place of prosy protose, coffee brewed from the brown roasted berry, grape juice fermented and "wine" that was wine, is a matter for the grave consideration by the estimable lady who purveyed the repast. For was this not confessedly, according to the implications and admissions of the menu, an imitation dinner?

But we are surprised and pained to note the introduction into this otherwise innocuous banquet of "Kellogg gelatine"—clearly a violation of the vegetarian canon. We submit that Dr KELLOGG is not a mineral: he is quite as foreign to the vegetable kingdom. Everybody knows how Kellogg gelatine was made. First it was boiled Kellogg. Then they strained him, and set him away in a cool place to "jell." The result was the Kellogg gelatine of this menu, in consuming which the vegetarians not only transgressed the law of their associated being, but made cannibals of themselves.

The "estimable lady who purveyed the repast" was the wealthy and influential socialite, Mary Foote Henderson. She was a convert to temperance and vegetarianism, and the author of a number of works on cookery and nutrition.

RESTAURANTS & HOTELS

1923: New York

Delmonico's served dinner for the last time at the 44th Street premises. Prohibition was its final death knell, as it was for so many others.

"[I]ts culinary legacy is staggering." —Robin Raisfeld, *New York Magazine*

"To dine at Delmonico's . . . two things are requisite—money and French. Of the latter little will answer; but the more you have of the former the better off you are, as well at Delmonico's as elsewhere." (*A nineteenth-century comment*)

FOOD & WAR

1864: USA, Civil War

From the diary of Frances W. Wallace, wife of Confederate officer Philip Hugh Wallace:

Mrs Beatty and Mrs Conley call to take us to the "Picnic" six miles in the country, have a very pleasant time. Meet the Mrs Johnsons, Mrs Conley, Mrs Judson and several other ladies. Have a fine dinner, good fish, hot coffee, turkey, chicken salad, ham, partridge, fruit cake, pound cake, wafers, biscuit and crackers.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1867: USA

Patent No. 64,856 was issued to Daniel Fobes of Boston for an "Improved Edible Composition" to be used "either for making a beverage or for coating articles of confectioner." The patent application goes on to describe the mix as "the roasted seeds of the *Coffea Arabica* in a powdered or ground state, and the torrefied seeds of the *Theobroma cacao*, also in a ground or powdered state, or the simple butter of such."

Essentially, this was what we would today call mocha, although the term at that time simply referred to a type of coffee, not a coffee-chocolate mix.

time simply referred to a type of coffee, not a coffee-chocolate mix.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1806: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day Meriwether Lewis wrote:

[T]oday we divided the remnant of our store of merchandize among our party with a view that each should purchase therewith a parsel of roots and bread from the natives as his stores for the rocky mountains for there seems but little probability that we shall be enabled to make any dried meat for that purpose and we cannot as yet form any just idea what resource the fish will furnish us. [E]ach man's stock in trade amounts to no more than one awl, one Knitting pin, a half an ounce of vermillion, two nedles, a few scanes of th[r]ead and about a yard of ribbon; a slender stock indeed with which to lay in a store of provision for that dreary wilderness. [W]e would make the men collect these roots themselves but there are several speceis of hemlock which are so much like the cows (roots) that it is difficult to discriminate them from the cows (roots) and we are affraid that they might poison themselves.

1927

Charles Lindberg made the first solo flight across the Atlantic. He took five sandwiches and a quart of water, saying that it would be enough for him to get to Paris, and if he didn't get there, it would be enough anyway. Weight was a serious consideration and the plane and contents were stripped to the bare minimum. He was also worried that eating might make him sleepy. "Why, it's past supper time! I untwist the neck of the paper bag, and pull out a sandwich . . . my first food since take-off. . . . Bread and meat never touched my tongue like this before. One sandwich is enough."

FOOD FIRSTS

1921: USA, Wonder Bread

A new product was announced in this day's edition of the *Indianapolis Star*:

W O N D E R

So now the mystery we will end,

And to every home a message send,

A message that brings joy to you,

To mother, father and grandma, too,

To Mary, Betty, Jack and Joe

For all the family will learn to know,

The meaning of this wonder word

That everyone has read and heard.

A new delight with every bite,

Both morning, noon and every night,

For Mary knows, you know her well,

And many a truth she's had to tell,

And now the best she ever knew,

She gives in this new loaf to you,

For as the bakery leads, they're still ahead,

And now it's

Delicious WONDER BREAD

P.S. Place your order for WONDER BREAD,

the new wrapped loaf, with your grocer Monday.

He will have it beginning Tuesday, May 24th

The Bigger, Better Taggart Loaf

You Will Know It By The

Wonder Wrapper

The Taggart Baking Company of Indianapolis had placed “blind” ads before this date to stimulate interest in its new product. The vice president of the company said that he thought of the name when he was inspired with “wonder” at the sight of a balloon-filled sky at the Indianapolis speedway.

FOOD & WAR

1809: Franco-Austrian War, “Soup made in the Cuirasses”

The Battle of Aspern-Essling was Napoleon Bonaparte’s first major defeat on land. When the two-day battle ended in the evening of May 22, there were over forty thousand men dead and many seriously injured. Medical assistance and supplies were almost nonexistent, but the military surgeon Baron Dominique-Jean Larrey was brilliantly creative when it came to feeding the wounded.

Louis Constant Wairy, the *valet de chambre* of Napoleon, described Larrey’s actions in his *Memoires*.

THE battle of Essling was disastrous in every way. Twelve thousand Frenchmen were killed. . . . Three times during the evening the Emperor sent to ask Marshal Masséna if he could hold out, and the brave captain, who saw his son fighting for the first time, and his friends and most intrepid officers falling by the dozen around him, held out until night fell.

The surgeons and health officers conducted themselves admirably on this terrible day; they displayed unheard-of courage, an activity which astonished even the Emperor; hence, in passing near them, he several times addressed them as “My brave surgeons!”

M. Larrey especially was sublime. After having treated all the wounded of the guard, who were huddled together in the isle of Lobau, he asked if there was any soup to give them. “No” replied the aides. “Make some of them”

was any soup to give them. No," replied the aides. "Make some of them," said he, pointing to some horses near him; "make some with the horses that belong to this picket." The horses were the property of a general. When some one went near them to obey M. Larrey's orders, the owner exclaimed, grew angry, and swore that he would not allow them to be taken. "Oh well!" said the worthy surgeon, "let them take mine and kill them, so that my comrades may have some soup." So said, so done; and as there were no iron pots on the island, the soup was made in cuirasses [breastplates]; it was black with gunpowder, and there was no salt. Marshal Masséna tasted this soup and found it good. One knew not which to admire the most, the zeal of the surgeons, the courage with which they braved danger by caring for the wounded on the field of battle, even in the midst of balls, or the stoical firmness of the soldiers, who, lying on the ground, one without an arm, another without a leg, chatted together about their campaigns while awaiting their turn to be operated on.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1630: America

John Winthrop (1587/8–1649) was the leader of a group of Puritans who founded the Massachusetts Bay Colony. The group left England on April 8, 1630. Winthrop was aboard the *Arbella*, the flagship of the fleet of eleven vessels carrying seven hundred emigrants.

A servant of one of our company had bargained with a child to sell him a box worth 3 pence for three biscuits a day all the voyage, and had received about forty, and had sold them and many more to some other servants. We caused his hands to be tied up to a bar, and hanged a basket with stones about his neck, and so he stood two hours.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1778: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde: "At Lenswade Bridge we caught a Prodigious fine Pike which weighed 8 Pound and a half and it had in his Belly another Pike, of above a Pound. We caught also there the finest Trout I ever saw which weighed 3 Pound and two ounces."

May 22

ABOARD SS ARIZONA

1964: Aboard Ship

The dinner menu aboard the *SS Arizona* on this day was as follows:

Dinner Menu

Green Onions Garden Red Radishes

Soup

Manhattan Clam Chowder

Entrees

Poached Finnan Haddie w/Slice Lemon

Yankee Pot Roast of Beef w Potato Pancake and Brown Gravy

Plain or Tomato Omelette and Frie[d] Eggs

Steamed Potatoes California Steamed Rice

Zucchini Squash Mashed Rutabagas

Fresh Fruit Jello

Coffee Fresh Milk Buttermilk Tea

MILITARY FOOD

1861: USA

General Benjamin Franklin Butler was the first volunteer major-general appointed by President Lincoln. He was presented with his orders on this day by General Winfield Scott, who apparently said, "You are very fortunate to be

assigned to duty at Fortress Monroe on Chesapeake Bay; it is just the season for soft shelled crabs, and hog fish have just come in, and they are the most delicious panfish you ever ate.”

FOOD ORGANIZATIONS

1946: USA

The Culinary Institute of America was founded. It began as the New Haven Restaurant Institute, a vocational training school for World War II veterans. Faculty comprised a chef, a baker, and a dietician, and the first intake was of fifty students, who enrolled for a sixteen-week program. The name was changed to the Culinary Institute of America in 1951, and the program is now two years long.

SPACE FOOD

2001: Space

The astronauts aboard the International Space Station took delivery of a pizza on this day.

Pizza Hut had been testing the product for over a year, to determine the changes that would be needed to maintain the pizza in excellent condition. Ultimately, the variety chosen was a crispy crust salami and cheese pizza. The pizza was made six inches in diameter to fit into the ovens aboard the space station, and was vacuum-packed to ensure freshness.

Randy Gier, chief marketing officer for Pizza Hut said, “After checking and re-checking the address, we made a few minor route adjustments to ensure that the pizza would successfully make it to the ISS. If space tourism is going to be a reality, Pizza Hut pizza will make the trip even better.”

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1806: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific

Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day Meriwether Lewis wrote:

The horse which the Indians have given us to kill was driven away by the natives with a gang of their horsemen I presume in mistake; being without meat at noon we directed one of the largest of our colts to be killed. We found the flesh of this animal fat tender and by no means illy flavoured. We have three others which we mean to reserve for the rocky mountains if we can subsist here without them.

1841: Australia

From the journal of Edward John Eyre (1815–1901) on an expedition into the inland of Central Australia:

I wished Wylie to go out again on the 22nd, to try for another kangaroo; but the other not being yet all used, he was very unwilling to do so, and it was only upon my threatening to move on if he did not, that I could get him out. As soon as he was gone, I went down to Point Malcolm to try to fish, as the weather was now so much more moderate. Unfortunately, my tackling was not strong, and after catching three rock-fish, weighing together three pounds and a half; a large fish got hooked, and took great part of my line, hook and all, away.

It was very vexing to lose a line when I had not many, but still more so to miss a fine fish that would have weighed fifteen or sixteen pounds. Being obliged to come back, I spent the remainder of the afternoon in preparing lines for the morrow.

Towards evening Wylie returned gloomy and sulky, and without having fired a shot; neither had he brought the horses up with him to water as I had requested him to do, and now it was too late to go for them, and they would have to be without water for the night. I was vexed at this, and gave him a good scolding for his negligence, after which I endeavoured to ascertain what had so thoroughly put him out of humour, for ordinarily he was one of the best tempered natives I had met with: a single sentence revealed the whole—“The—dogs had eaten the skin.”

This observation came from the very bottom of his soul, and at once gave me an idea of the magnitude of the disappointment he had sustained; the fact was, upon leaving the camp in the morning he had taken a firestick in

his hand, and gone straight back to where we skinned the kangaroo on the 21st, with the intention of singeing off the hair and eating the skin, which had been left hanging over a bush. Upon his arrival he found it gone: the wild dogs had been beforehand with him and deprived him of the meal he expected; hence his gloomy, discontented look upon his return. As yet I had not told him that I had been fishing; but upon showing him what I had brought home, and giving him the two largest for supper, his brow again cleared, and he voluntarily offered to go out again to try to get a kangaroo tomorrow.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1889: France

Vincent van Gough wrote to his brother Theo from the asylum at Saint-Rémy:

The food all right as far as it goes. It tastes a bit musty, of course, as in a cockroach-infested restaurant in Paris, or in a boarding-house. The poor wretches here, having absolutely nothing to do (not a book, nothing more to distract them than a game of boules or a game of draughts), have no other daily distraction than to stuff themselves with chickpeas, haricot beans, lentils and other groceries and colonial produce, in set quantities and at stated hours. As the digestion of these foodstuffs offers certain difficulties, they fill their days in a way as offensive as it is cheap.

May 23

A WARTIME BANQUET

1943: Moscow, Soviet Union, World War II

Premier Josef Stalin threw a banquet on this night for Joseph E. Davies, special American envoy. The banquet was held in the white marble Catherine room of the Kremlin.

The *Hammond Times* (Indiana) noted that at the time, Soviet Russia was reporting that it needed more food via the Lend-Lease program, if it was to win

the war, but the dinner held on this night did not suggest any shortages in Premier Stalin's own pantry.

The dinner was not what you would call wholly "dry." They served red and white wines, vodka with hot pepper, and champagne. As to the menu, this is all the poor Russians could offer Davies at the dinner, which lasted four and a half hours.

Caviar, back of dried sturgeon, herring with dressing, back of sturgeon in sauce, English-style roast beef, cold ham, gelatin, olives and spring salad, radishes, cucumbers and a variety of cheeses were the opening courses,

Then came wild fowl, chicken soup, consommé, Siberian salmon, snipe and fried potatoes, turkey and cauliflower. This was followed by strawberry tarts and vanilla ice-cream, candy, nuts, and liqueurs.

A RAILROAD LUNCH

1926: France

French president Gaston Doumergue was traveling aboard a railroad train of the *Compagnie Internationale des Wagons-Lits* (International Sleeping Car Company) on this day. The menu for his lunch, served aboard the train, was this:

Oeufs pochés Clélia

Côtelettes d'Agneau Printanière

Poulet de grain roti

Salade

Pâtisserie

Dessert

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769: Tahiti

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks: “Trade very slack today, so much so that we have only Cocoa nuts for the sick, and the people are obligd to have bread servd them at dinner.”

1789: At Sea

From the journal of Captain William Bligh, adrift in an open boat after the mutiny on the *Bounty*:

Saturday, May the 23d. Strong gales with very hard squalls, and rain; wind S E, and S S E. The misery we suffered this day exceeded the preceding. The night was dreadful. The sea flew over us with great force, and kept us baling with horror and anxiety. At dawn of day I found everyone in a most distressed condition, and I now began to fear that another such a night would put an end to the lives of several who seemed no longer able to support such sufferings. Every one complained of severe pains in their bones; but these were alleviated, in some degree, by an allowance of two teaspoonfuls of rum; after drinking which, having wrung our cloaths, and taken our breakfast of bread and water, we became a little refreshed.

1841: Australia

From the journal of Edward John Eyre (1815–1901) on an expedition into the inland of Central Australia. The aboriginal boy Wylie killed another kangaroo and made a sort of haggis from the offal.

Upon skinning the kangaroo, Wylie carefully singed, folded up, and put away the skin for another day, fully determined that this time he would lose no part of the precious prize. Having taken the paunch and emptied it, he proceeded to make a kind of haggis (rather a dirty one to be sure), by putting into it the liver, lights, heart, and small intestines, and then tying it up, thrust it into the fire to be roasted whole. This seemed to be a favourite dish with him, and he was now as happy as a king, sleeping and eating alternately the whole night long; his only complaint now being that the water was so far off, and that as we had to carry it all up from the sand-hills to our camp, he could not drink so much as he should like, and in consequence, could not eat so much either, for it required no small quantity of liquid to wash down the enormous masses of meat that he consumed whenever he had an opportunity.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1664: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys. He described a very fine meal on this day which included the “royal fish”—the sturgeon—and a lamprey pie: “Then to Mr. Falconer’s to a good dinner, having myself carried them a vessel of sturgeon and a Lamprey pie.”

1747: Shalstone House, Buckinghamshire, England

The widowed Elizabeth Purefoy sent an order to her supplier in London on this day.

I received your pickled salmon, and the pot of anchovies, & six Sevill oranges which were all very good & wee return your thanks for them. The salmon was very good but jumbled into pieces & the liquor all run out. . . . I have sent you with your butter a stone Bottle which I desire you to get filled with the very best sallet oyll & sent as soon as may be.

May 24

An Empire Day Luncheon

May 24 was the birthday of Queen Victoria in 1819, and was celebrated by her subjects across the globe in a great variety of ways, as can be seen from the journal entries below. In 1899, the Education Department of Ontario, Canada, determined that the queen’s birthday was to be Empire Day throughout the province. By 1905, the day was recognized and celebrated throughout all her dominions across the globe.

1933: London, England

The Junior Carlton Club held an Empire Day luncheon that featured 187 ingredients sourced from all corners of the Empire. The *Times* reported the plans a few days before the event.

The luncheon, which will be non-political, has been organized as a demonstration of Imperial good will, and, by presenting an exclusively Empire menu, practical effect will be given to a desire for mutual cooperation. Almost every part of the Empire, from the smallest island to the largest Dominion, will be represented on the bill of fare.

The menu will contain 187 ingredients from 45 Dominions and Colonies. Many of the articles of food are the gifts of the Colonies. The soups will include North Borneo bird's nest, Straits Settlements shark's fin, Fiji cucumber, and Ascension Islands green turtle; and among the fish dishes will be Irish salmon, Dover sole, grilled mackerel with Ugandan chilly sauce, whitebait with Kelantan Malayan pepper, halibut with Bombay chutney sauce, and fried whiting with New Zealand melted butter. Roast Welsh milk lamb, Surrey fowl and Ulster bacon, braised sweetbread and Jersey peas, liver and Canadian bacon, and Indian mutton curry will be among the hot dishes, while the cold sidetable will include a baron of Scotch beef, New Zealand lamb, Gambia groundnut rissoles, English veal, and wild duck and Windward Islands guava jelly. Among the sweets will be Malta figs and cream, Turk's Island tamarinds, Rhodesian buckwheat cakes and maple syrup, Mauritius pineapple, Canadian apple pie, Kenya coffee mould, and Banbury pancakes.

A feature of the wine list, also entirely Imperial, will be mead, the old national drink of Britain, made from an Elizabethan recipe. There will be hock from South Africa, burgundy from Australia, brandy from Cyprus, and liqueur whisky from Scotland. A supply of cigars has been received from Borneo and Jamaica, and for those who prefer a lighter smoke there will be cigarettes from Rhodesia and Cyprus.

FOOD FIRSTS

1882: London, England

The first successful shipment of frozen meat from New Zealand arrived in the United Kingdom aboard the sailing ship *Dunedin*. An earlier attempt had failed due to a fault in the equipment, and the meat had to be sold locally. The equipment was repaired, and the *Dunedin* set sail again on February 15. After a ninety-eight day voyage, the cargo was delivered in excellent condition.

The *Times* a few days later summed up the general excitement at this amazing development:

Today we have to record such a triumph over physical difficulties as would have been incredible, and even unimaginable, a very few years ago. Had any fervent Protectionist told Parliament in the heat of the Free Trade controversy that New Zealand would send into our London market five thousand dead sheep at a time, and in as good condition as if they had been slaughtered in some suburban abattoir, he would have brought on himself a storm of derision, . . . But this has actually come to pass. We seem only just now to have arrived at the certainty that meat can be brought in good condition a mere week's voyage across the Atlantic in the most temperate of the earth's zones. The present arrival is by a sailing ship after a passage of ninety-eight days across the tropics; indeed for a large part of the voyage in heat which Englishmen find almost intolerable.

THE REFORM CLUB

1836: London, England

The Reform Club opened in Pall Mall as a meeting place for the “liberal Whigs, Radicals, etc.” The premises were right next door to the Carlton Club, the bastion of the Tories. In the opinion of one commenter, “It would not be unfair to say that in its early days the club owed its success and popularity quite as much to the excellence of its food as to the unsullied purity of its Liberalism.”

The acquisition of Alexis Soyer as chef in 1837 certainly had a huge part to play in the reputation of the club. He remained in charge of the kitchens until 1851, and some of the dishes generated there, and dinners catered for, have entered into culinary history. One of the dishes developed by Soyer became an enduring favorite signature dish: Mutton Cutlets Reform. A number of members of the club are said to have eaten the dish every single day for luncheon.

Soyer included the recipe for the cutlets in his book *The Gastronomic Regenerator* (1847):

Cotelettes de Mouton à la Reform

Chop a quarter of a pound of lean cooked ham very fine, and mix it with the

same quantity of breadcrumbs, then have ten very nice cotelettes, lay them flat on your table, season lightly with pepper and salt, egg over with a paste-brush, and throw them into the ham and breadcrumbs, then beat them lightly with a knife, put ten spoonfuls of oil in a sauté-pan, place over the fire, and when quite hot, lay in the cotelettes, fry nearly ten minutes (over a moderate fire) of a light brown colour; to ascertain when done, press your knife upon the thick part, if quite done it will feel rather firm; possibly they may not all be done at one time, so take out those that are ready first, and lay them on a cloth until the others are done; as they require to be cooked with the gravy in them, dress upon a thin border of mashed potatoes in a crown, with the bones pointing outwards, sauce over with a pint of the sauce reform, and serve. If for a large dinner you may possibly be obliged to cook the cotelettes half an hour before, in which case they must be very underdone, and laid in a clean sauté-pan, with two or three spoonfuls of thin glaze; keep them in the hot closet, moistening them occasionally with the glaze (with a past-brush) until ready to serve.

Sauce à la Réform

Cut up two middling-sized onions into thin slices and put them into a stewpan with two sprigs of parsley, two of thyme, two bay-leaves, two ounces of lean uncooked ham, half a clove of garlic, half a blade of mace, and an ounce of fresh butter; stir them ten minutes over a sharp fire, then add two tablespoonfuls of Tarragon vinegar, and one of Chilli vinegar, boil it one minute ; then add a pint of brown sauce, or sauce Espagnole, three tablespoonfuls of preserved tomatos, and eight of consomme; place it over the fire until boiling, then put it at the corner, let it simmer ten minutes, skim it well, then place it again over the fire, keeping it stirred, and reduce until it adheres to the back of the spoon; then add a good tablespoonful of red currant jelly, and half ditto of chopped mushrooms; season a little more if required with pepper and salt; stir it until the jelly is melted, then pass it through a tammie into another stewpan. When ready to serve, make it hot, and add the white of a hard-boiled egg cut into strips half an inch long, and thick in proportion, four white blanched mushrooms, one gherkin, two green Indian pickles, and half an ounce of cooked ham, or tongue, all cut in strips like the white of egg; do not let it boil afterwards. This sauce must be poured over whatever it is served with.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1770: Australia

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks: “‘*Bustard Bay*’. At Dinner we eat the Bustard we had shot yesterday, it turned out an excellent bird, far the best we all agreed that we have eat since we left England, and as it weighed 15 pounds our Dinner was not only good but plentyfull.”

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt’s journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

It was the Queen’s birthday, and we celebrated it with what—as our only remaining luxury—we were accustomed to call a fat cake, made of four pounds of flour and some suet, which we had saved for the express purpose, and with a pot of sugared tea. We had for several months been without sugar, with the exception of about ten pounds, which was reserved for cases of illness and for festivals. So necessary does it appear to human nature to interrupt the monotony of life by marked days, on which we indulge in recollections of the past, or in meditations on the future, that we all enjoyed those days as much, and even more, than when surrounded with all the blessings of civilized society; although I am free to admit, that fat-cake and sugared tea in prospect might induce us to watch with more eagerness for the approach of these days of feasting.

The empty sugar bags were saved in anticipation of celebrating the anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo on June 18, when they were boiled up with their tea.

1861: Australia

From the notes and journals of members of the ill-fated Burke and Wills expedition to cross Australia from south to north in 1860–1861.

By this date the group were in dire straits with their supplies virtually gone, and their last camel eaten.

Started with King to celebrate the Queen’s birthday by fetching from Nardoo Creek what is now to us the staff of life. Returned at a little after two p.m., with a fair supply, but find the collecting of the seed a slower and

more troublesome process than could be desired. Whilst picking the seed, about eleven o'clock a.m., both of us heard distinctly the noise of an explosion, as if of a gun, at some considerable distance. We supposed it to have been a shot fired by Mr Burke; but on returning to the camp found that he had not fired nor had heard the noise. The sky was partially overcast with high cum. str. clouds, and a light breeze blew from the east, but nothing to indicate a thunderstorm in any direction.

1913: Antarctica

From the diary of Douglas Mawson's Antarctic expedition of 1911–1903:

We did not forget Empire Day and duly "spliced the mainbrace." The most bigoted teetotaler could not call us an intemperate party. On each Saturday night, one drink per man was served out, the popular toast being "Sweethearts and Wives." The only other convivial meetings of our small symposium were on the birthdays of each member, Midwinter's Day and King's Birthday.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1667: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

We broke off at noon without doing much, and then home, where my wife not well, but yet engaged by invitation to go with Sir W. Pen. I got her to go with him by coach to Islington to the old house, where his lady and Madam Lowther, with her exceeding fine coach and mean horses, and her mother-in-law, did meet us, and two of Mr. Lowther's brothers, and here dined upon nothing but pigeon-pyes, which was such a thing for him to invite all the company to, that I was ashamed of it.

FOOD & WAR

1706: Belgium, War of the Spanish Succession

The Earl of Orkney wrote to his family the day after the Battle of Ramilies

(Belgium), during the War of the Spanish Succession:

Twenty fourth of May, seven o'clock: You will be extremely glad to hear we have fought a great battle yesterday and beat the French, and I am in good health, but am hardly able to hold up my head, I am so weary and faint, for it is forty eight hours I have not eaten nor drunk, but once or twice a glass of wine and a bit of bread. . . . But here we are endeavouring to make camp and form in some order, for we look like a beaten army.

May 25

THE HOT DOG PICNIC

1939: USA

Eleanor Roosevelt wrote a regular and widely syndicated newspaper column called *My Day*. In the column on May 25, she discussed the controversy developing over her arrangements for the upcoming visit of the King and Queen of England.

Oh dear, oh dear, so many people are worried that the “dignity of our country” will be imperiled by inviting Royalty to a picnic, particularly a hot dog picnic! My mother-in-law has sent me a letter which begs that she control me in some way. In order to spare my feelings, she has written on the back a little message: “Only one of many such.” She did not know, poor darling, that I have “many such” right here in Washington. Let me assure you, dear readers, that if it is hot there will be no hot dogs, and even if it is cool there will be plenty of other food, and the elder members of the family and the more important guests will be served with due formality.

See **June 11**.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1770: Australia

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks:

We examined the orange juice and brandy which had been sent on board as prepared by Dr Hulmes directions: It had never been moved from the cask in which it came on board. About ½ of it had been used or leaked out; the remainder was covered with a whitish mould but otherwise was not at all damaged either to taste or sight when it came out of the cask, but when put into a bottle in 3 or 4 days it became ropery and good for nothing. On this we resolved to have it evaporated immediately to a strong essence and put up in Bottles immediately.

1789: At Sea

From the journal of Captain William Bligh, written after he and eighteen loyal crewmen were set adrift in an open boat on April 28, 1789 by mutineers aboard HMS *Bounty*:

About three o'clock the sea began to run fair, and we shipped but little water, I therefore determined to know the exact quantity of bread I had left; and on examining found, according to my present issues, sufficient for 29 days allowance. In the course of this time I hoped to be at Timor; but, as that was very uncertain, and perhaps after all we might be obliged to go to Java, I determined to proportion my issues to six weeks. I was apprehensive that this would be ill received, and that it would require my utmost resolution to enforce it; for, small as the quantity was which I intended to take away, for our future good, yet it might appear to my people like robbing them of life, and some, who were less patient than their companions, I expected would very ill brook it. I however represented it so essentially necessary to guard against delays in our voyage by contrary winds, or other causes, promising to enlarge upon the allowance as we got on, that it was readily agreed to. I therefore fixed, that every person should receive one 25th of a pound of bread for breakfast, and one 25th of a pound for dinner; so that by omitting the proportion for supper, I had 43 days allowance.

1817: Australia

From John Oxley's journal of his expedition in 1817 to explore the course of the Lachlan River:

[S]ome good grass was found for the horses a little to the south-west. We

therefore stopped for the night, and ascended the face of the mount for the purpose of looking around: a very large brown speckled snake was killed about half way up, which, in the absence of fresh provisions, was afterwards eaten by some of the party.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1660: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys. He is one of the party sent to Holland to bring King Charles back to England from Holland.

By the morning we were come close to the land, and everybody made ready to get on shore. The King and the Dukes did eat their breakfast before they went, and there being set some Shipps diet before them, only to show them the manner of the Shipps diet, they eat of nothing else but pease and pork and boiled beef.

1668: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

Cambridge. . . . And here lighting, I took my boy and two brothers and walked to Magdalen College; and there into the Buttery as stranger and there drank my bellyfull of their beer, which pleased me as the best I ever drank; and hear by the butler's man, who was a son to Goody Mulliner over against the College that we used to buy stewed prunes of, concerning the College and people in it.

1849: England

The Brontë sisters, Anne, Charlotte, and Ellen, arrived early in the afternoon, by train, in Scarborough. They treated themselves to dandelion coffee and bought season tickets for the Spa and Cliff Bridge. Anne died a few days later from consumption.

May 26

THE CORONATION OF THE TSAR

1896: Russia

The coronation of Tsar Nicholas II (1868–1918) and his queen, Alexandra, took place on this day, and was followed by a week of festivities, including, of course, a coronation banquet.

Seven thousand people attended the banquet. The menu included borscht, pepper pot soup, turnovers filled with meat, steamed fish, spring lamb. Pheasants in cream sauce, salad, asparagus, fruit, and ice cream.

A great feast and a souvenir mug for each person was also planned for the ordinary folk on the outskirts of the city, but tragically, the huge crowd that gathered became unmanageable, and 1,300 people were trampled and crushed. The tsar was horrified, and took this to be a bad omen. Ironically, he was forced to abdicate in February 1918 as the Russian Revolution gathered force, and in July 17, 1918, he and his family were executed.

BIRTHDAY CAKE CANDLES

1746: Germany

The first written mention of birthday cake candles appears in a description of the festivities on the sixtieth birthday of Count Ludwig von Zinzendorf of Marienborn, given by Andrew Frey, one of the guests.

[T]here was a Cake as large as any Oven could be found to bake it, and Holes made in the Cake according to the Years of the Person's Age, every one having a Candle stuck into it, and one in the Middle; the Outside of the Court was adorned with Festoons and foliage.

FOOD & THE LAW

1569: England

Queen Elizabeth I by charter on this day united the White Bread Bakers and the Brown Bread Bakers. This was undone by James I in a charter of June 6, 1621,

but the two professions were again united by a charter of James II in 1686.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1848: Britain

An early food preservation patent was granted to Felix Hyacinthe Folliett Louis for his method of preserving milk by “converting it into solid cakes or masses, soluble in warm water.” The cakes were made by “mixing with the milk well clarified raw sugar, agitating it, and evaporating it in certain apparatus, consisting of shallow pans with steam jackets.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1789: At Sea

From the journal of Captain William Bligh who had been set adrift in an open boat with eighteen loyal seamen on April 18, 1789, by the mutineers aboard HMS *Bounty*:

In the [previous] evening we saw several boobies flying so near to us, that we caught one of them by hand. This bird is as large as a good duck; like the noddy, it has received its name from seamen, for suffering itself to be caught on the masts and yards of ships. They are the most presumptive proofs of being in the neighbourhood of land of any sea-fowl we are acquainted with. I directed the bird to be killed for supper, and the blood to be given to three of the people who were the most distressed for want of food. The body, with the entrails, beak, and feet, I divided into 18 shares, and with an allowance of bread, which I made a merit of granting, we made a good supper, compared with our usual fare.

In the morning we caught another booby, so that Providence seemed to be relieving our wants in a very extraordinary manner. . . . Every person was now overjoyed at the addition to their dinner, which I distributed as I had done in the evening; giving the blood to those who were the most in want of food.

To make our bread a little savoury we frequently dipped it in salt water; but for my own part I generally broke mine into small pieces and eat it in my

for my own part I generally broke mine into small pieces, and eat it in my allowance of water, out of a cocoa-nut shell, with a spoon, economically avoiding to take too large a piece at a time, so that I was as long at dinner as if it had been a much more plentiful meal.

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

In passing this gap, on a previous reconnoitring ride with Brown, I met with several natives with their wives and children, encamped at the north entrance of it. When they saw us, the men poised their spears, and shook their waddis to frighten us, but when, notwithstanding their menaces, we approached them, they left all their goods, and with their weapons only hurried up the rocks with wonderful agility. Three koolimans (vessels of stringy bark) were full of honey water, from one of which I took a hearty draught, and left a brass button for payment. Dillis, fish spears, a roasted bandicoot, a species of potatoe, wax, a bundle of tea-tree bark with dry shavings; several flints fastened with human hair to the ends of sticks, and which are used as knives to cut their skin and food; a spindle to make strings of opossum wool; and several other small utensils, were in their camp.

1841: Australia

From the journal of Edward John Eyre (1815–1901) on an expedition into the inland of Central Australia:

Up early, and Wylie, who had been eating the whole night, was so thirsty, that he actually walked all the way through the dew and cold of the morning to the water to drink, as I could only afford him one pint out of the kegs. We had now been in camp six clear days, at this most favourable position; we had got an abundant and wholesome supply of provisions for ourselves, and had been enabled to allow our horses to enjoy a long unbroken interval of rest, amidst the best of pasturage, and where there was excellent water.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1788: Spain

William Eden, 1st Baron Auckland (1745–1814) was an English diplomat. He was ambassador to Spain in 1781–1789. In a letter on this day he wrote about the food in his new home:

This day I have absented myself from Court, in order to settle various businesses without interruption. We have a small company to dinner, to eat some venison which his Catholic Majesty has sent to us, and which we are told is to be good. His Majesty makes many presents in this way to the ambassadors, besides supplying them with butter, milk, water (and medicines, if they choose to have them), and his gardeners bring us flowers almost every day. We pay well for the butter, and milk, and cream, but it is a great point to be able to have them, and they are excellent in their kind. On the subject of eatables I should say a little: the beef and the mutton look both so bad, so dry, and so hard, that I have never yet had the heart to taste either the one or the other; the veal is good and the fish excellent, sufficiently plentiful, and of curious and various kinds from the Mediterranean, such as I have never seen before, but such as the Archbishop must have met with in Italy. The vegetables are plentiful and good; the poultry hitherto moderate, except the turkeys, which are fine, and we are told that in about a month we shall have plenty of game; the apricots are plentiful, and we always have two large pies made of them at dinner, and one at supper. We have iced water always from morning to night, and it is reckoned wholesome. Sunday evening. The venison was fat, and better in flavour than we expected. Before I dismiss this interesting subject of the table, I must not forget to tell you, if I have not already told you, that we find good potatoes in Spain, which is contrary to our expectation; and as it may decide the Archbishop to make the visit to us which he is meditating, pray tell him that there is most excellent honey here.

May 27

A MILK TRIBUTE

1558: England

Edmund Porter, of Alresford, Essex, directed in his will that John Porter should

have “a house called Knapps, with the appurtenances, church fences, and caprons (which comprised thirty-one acres of land,) to him and his heirs, upon condition that they should give, for ever, the morning milk of two able milk beasts to the poor of this parish every Sunday yearly, from Whitsunday to Michaelmas, 3s. 4d. on Good Friday, and a like sum on Christmas Day.”

This milk tribute was subsequently commuted for a money payment, which was distributed as bread.

FOOD & WAR

1943: Canada, World War II

Meat rationing began on this day. Butchers were required to sell only standard cuts listed on the chart of Wartime Prices and Trade Board, and consumers were allowed two coupons per week to use as they wished, within the limits of availability.

Meat was divided into four groups. Group A (smoked meats, bacon and ham) were valued at half a pound per coupon; Group B (boneless steak, roasts etc.) three-quarters of a pound; Group C (hamburger, porterhouse steak) one pound; and Group D (sausage and leg of lamb) one and a quarter pound. Offal (liver, kidney, sweetbreads, etc.) was unrestricted.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1806: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day Meriwether Lewis wrote:

[W]e sent Reubin Feilds in surch of the horse which the indians had given us to kill. . . . [H]e returned with the horse and we killed and butchered him; . . . Hohastillpilp told us that most of the horses we saw runing at large in this neighbourhood belonged to himself and his people, and whenever we were in want of meat he requested that we would kill any of them we wished; this is a piece of liberallity which would do honour to such a bo[a]st of civilization; indeed I doubt whether there are not a great number of our countrymen who would see us fast many days before their

of our countrymen who would see us last many days before their compassion would excite them to a similar act of liberality. . . . [W]e also sent Sergt. Ordway and 2 men this morning over to Lewis's river for salmon, . . . Drewyer, Cruzatte, and Labuish returned at 4 P.M. with five deer.

Also on this day, Patrick Gass wrote:

These roots are a good diet, but in general we do not relish them so well as meat. We therefore killed another horse today, which one of the natives gave us sometime ago for that purpose. He was so wild and vicious that we could not manage him or do anything with him.

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

On the evening of the 27th May, we killed one of our bullocks, which had suffered more than any of the others by the journey, in consequence of his having carried our ammunition, which had decreased comparatively little, and the great weight of which had raised large lumps on his ribs, which had formed into ulcers. We were very disagreeably disappointed in not finding sufficient fat to fry the liver, which was our favourite dish; even the fat of the marrow had disappeared and had left a watery tissue, which, when grilled for some time, turned into a yellow substance, having the taste of the fried yolk of an egg. We dried our meat on the 28th, 29th, and 30th. I took a set of lunar sights, and calculated my longitude 143 degrees 30 minutes.

1861: Australia

From the notes and journals of members of the ill-fated Burke and Wills expedition to cross Australia from south to north, in 1860–1861. On this day, Wills wrote:

On reaching the sand-hills below where Landa was bogged I passed some blacks on a flat collecting nardoo seed. Never saw such an abundance of the

seed before. The ground in some parts was quite black with it. There were only two or three gins and children, and they directed me on, as if to their camp, in the direction I was before going; but I had not gone far over the first sand-hill when I was overtaken by about twenty blacks, bent on taking me back to their camp, and promising any quantity of nardoo and fish. On my going with them, one carried my shovel, and another insisted on taking my swag, in such a friendly manner that I could not refuse them. They were greatly amused with the various little things I had with me. In the evening they supplied me with abundance of nardoo and fish; and one of the old men, Poko Tinnamira, shared his gunyah with me.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1792: Britain

From the diaries of John Byng, 5th Viscount Torrington, written during his horseback tours of England and Wales: “*Biggleswade, Bedfordshire*. I had for dinner at 2 o’clock (the hour of rational and useful appetite) a boil’d fowl, greens, roast beef, Yorkshire pudding, asparagus, tarts, and custards.”

1844: Salem, Massachusetts, USA

From the American journals of Nathaniel Hawthorne:

My cook fills his office admirably. He prepared what I must acknowledge to be the best dish of fried fish and potatoes for dinner to-day that I ever tasted in this house. I scarcely recognized the fish of our own river. I make him get all the dinners, while I confine myself to the much lighter task of breakfast and tea. He also takes his turn in washing the dishes.

1856: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau:

To Kalmia Swamp with Sanborn. My three kinds of birch sap have now become more acid, especially the white and canoe birch. The black birch is milder and more agreeable. With sugar it is an agreeable drink. I prefer it to cream-o’-tartar water. This is the real birch wine.

May 28

A DINNER OF TRANSGENIC FOODS

1998: USA

The Alliance for Bio-Integrity (a non-profit organization) coordinated a suit filed on this day against the FDA on behalf of a wide group of scientists, health professionals, chefs, consumers, and other concerned parties, in respect of genetically engineered food.

Andrew Kimbrell from the International Center for Technology Assessment (also a non-profit organization), acting for the plaintiffs, said:

The FDA has placed the interests of a handful of biotechnology companies ahead of their responsibility to protect public health by failing to require testing and labeling of genetically engineered foods, the agency has made consumers unknowing guinea pigs for potentially harmful, unregulated food substances.

To push home their point, the plaintiffs presented a menu for a *Dinner of Transgenic Foods*, all of which were at that time currently available on the market, were products of federally funded research, or had applied for environmental release.

Appetizers

Fingerling Potatoes with Waxmoth Genes (served with sour cream from bovine growth hormone treated cows)

Juice of Tomatoes with Flounder Genes

Entree

Braised Pork Loin with Human Growth Genes

Boiled New Potatoes with Chicken Genes

Fried Squash with Watermelon and Zucchini Virus Genes

Toasted Cornbread with Firefly Genes

Dessert

Rice Pudding with Pea and Bacteria Genes

FOOD FIRSTS

1659: Paris, France

David Chaillou, a Toulouse-born officer in the queen's household, became the first *Chocolatier du Roi* on this day, when Louis XI signed Royal Letters Patent guaranteeing him for twenty-nine years “the exclusive privilege of making, selling, and proposing for consumption a certain composition called chocolate . . . whether as liqueur or pastilles or in boxes, or in such other manner as may please him.”

Chaillou opened up a *Maison du Chocolate* in the Rue de l'Arbre-Sec in Paris, which quickly became the fashionable place to be.

THE SOY BEAN

1909: Lennox, Massachusetts, USA

The American Pediatric Society heard a pioneering paper on “The Soy Bean in Infant Feeding” (J. Ruhrán). The author of the paper gave an overview of the history, composition, and culture of the soy bean, and summarized by saying:

As regards the use of the beans in infant feeding it seemed to me that soy bean gruel or milk, either alone or with cow's milk, might be of value in feeding several classes of cases, viz., of marasmus and malnutrition, as a substitute for milk in diarrhea, and in intestinal and stomach disorders, and in diabetes mellitus.

PASTA

1574: Genoa

The *Arte dei Fidelari* (Guild of the Pasta-makers) was constituted on this day. The statutes of the guild specified a number of regulations for the purchase of wheat and semolina, and the professional behavior and accountability of guild members.

No master of the guild was allowed to set foot aboard English ships or any other vessel in port to purchase wheat or semolina, but could only purchase it on land. The penalty for breach of this regulation was five *lire*. A member who purchased wheat or semolina had to make two-thirds of it available to other guild members. There were also strict regulations as to the quality of the wheat purchased to be used in the manufacture of dry pasta.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1897: USA

Pearl B. Wait, a developer and manufacturer of patent medicine in LeRoy, New York, bought the 1845 patent for powdered gelatin granted to Peter Cooper (*see June 20*). Wait flavored and sweetened the powder and adapted it into a dessert dish that his wife, May, named Jell-O.

1858: Britain

Erasmus Bond of the county of Middlesex was granted a patent for “An Improved Aerated Liquid.” His new liquid was Quinine Tonic Water. The patent specifications say:

My invention relates to the preparation of an aerated tonic liquid. . . . The preparation consists of citrate of quinine and silicine, or quinine alone, dissolved in water by the admixture of a little sulphuric acid, or it may be dissolved by the carbonic acid gas; and I further add flavouring ingredients, if desired, to suit the palate. The proportions for one bottle are about as follows:—Quinine, five-eighths of a grain; salicine, five forty-eighths of a grain; sulphuric acid, about one minim; carbonic acid, seventy-two grains, or about four times its volume in gas.

1859: USA

The *Scientific American* magazine published on this day summarized the progress made in ice cream freezers, and provided a recipe from one of the manufacturers.

Ice Cream Freezer

There is one advantage of our climate which we do not usually estimate sufficiently highly, and that is, if our summers are hot and tropical, and if people do meet one another in the street with all the agony and used-up-ness depicted in their countenances, our winters are cold enough to give us a good supply of ice all the year round, and ice cream is the solace of the summer evening. The freezers invented by H. B. Masser, of Sunbury, Pa., and patented by him Dec. 15, 1848, and Jan. 19, 1858, are so well-known as to scarcely need any description, were it not that at this season of the year we wish to say something on freezing, and to give some recipes for making ices of different kinds.

. . . The following recipes are furnished us by Mr Masser, (who has probably investigated this subject more scientifically and with more success than any other person in the country), and will be found valuable to all housekeepers who wish to make their own ices. When pure cream cannot readily be obtained, ice cream is frequently made from milk, with the addition of other ingredients, to enrich it and give it consistency. For this purpose eggs, arrowroot, and similar substances are used. As a general rule, meagre or thin cream or milk requires more sugar.

The following recipe, as a substitute for pure cream, has been successfully used: Two quarts good rich milk, four fresh eggs, three-quarters of a pound of white sugar, six teaspoons of Bermuda arrowroot. Rub the arrowroot smooth in a little cold milk, beat the eggs and sugar together, bring the milk to the boiling point, then stir in the arrowroot, remove it then from the fire and immediately add the eggs and sugar, stirring briskly to keep the eggs from cooking, then set aside to cool. If flavored with extracts, let it be done just before putting it in the freezer. If the vanilla bean is used, it should be boiled in a little milk or water. Vanilla can be made to go as far again as usual by boiling the bean a long time in a close vessel.

For orange or pineapple cream, cut the fruit in thin slices and cover the same with plenty of fine or pulverized white sugar. After standing a few hours. the sirup can be drawn off and used for flavoring the cream as above

described. The flavor of other fruits can be extracted and used in a similar way. For orange or lemon water ices, grate on the head of loaf sugar the outer rinds of two or three good oranges or lemons, and to each quart of water add the above, with the juice, and a pound of white sugar to sweeten the same. The white of one or two eggs should be added to every quart to give it consistency. To make Roman punch, it is only necessary to add to the lemon mixture a little rum or Jamaica spirit.

FOOD & WAR

1941: Britain, World War II

The food minister, Lord Woolton, announced a trial of egg rationing on this day. He said:

For a long time I withstood the appeals to ration eggs. It was however, my practice to send people to stand in queues and listen to the conversations of the shoppers. By that means I got an unprejudiced account of the reactions to rationing. I became very disturbed to receive reports from wide sources that there were people in the queues who were agitators and who were trying to create dissatisfaction among the public, using the shortage of eggs and the wide inequalities of their distribution as a justification for complaint. I believed that this was a political agitation that emanated from a foreign source.

The Ministry of Food's recipe for scrambled egg using dried egg mix was as follows: "1 egg reconstituted (mixed with water), 0.5 of an ounce of fat and 1 tablespoon of milk. Melt the fat in a pan, beat the egg and milk together, add to the fat in the pan, season well and cook over a gentle heat. Diced cooked vegetables could be added for flavour."

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1787: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde: "Mr. and Mrs. Jeanes with Miss Short dined and spent the Afternoon with us. We had for Dinner a nice boiled Leg of Lamb, a very nice small roasting Pigg, Apricot and Gooseberry Tarts

Oranges and Nutts by way of desert.”

1792: Britain

From the diaries of John Byng, 5th Viscount Torrington, written during his horseback tours of England and Wales: “My dinner (I love to repeat good ones) consisted of spatchcock’d eel, roasted pigeons, a loyn of pork roasted, with tarts, jellies, and custards. Enough for one gentleman?”

1831: USA

Alexis de Toqueville wrote to the Abbe Leseur about an official dinner with city officials in New York:

The other day the mayor of New York and the Alderman . . . to the number of 25 or 30 conducted us with great ceremony to all the prisons or houses of charity of the city. After which they invited us to an immense dinner, the first of this kind we have attended. I should like to describe it to you, but the thing is difficult. Picture to yourself, however, a long table like a refectory table at the high end of which the mayor flanked by your two servants was seated. Next came all the *convives, tous grands personages a faire pleurer*, for they laugh mighty little on this side of the Atlantic.

As for the dinner itself, it represented the infancy of art: the vegetables and fish before the meat, the oysters for dessert. In a word, complete barbarism. My first glance around the table relieved me of a great weight; I didn’t see any wine but only, as usual, water and brandy. So I seated myself with becoming gravity at the right of Mr Mayor [Walter Browne] and awaited developments. Unfortunately, as soon as the soup was removed, they brought wine. The mayor drank to our health in the English manner, which consists in filling a small glass, in raising it while looking at you, and in drinking it, the whole performed with great solemnity. The person to whom this civility is addressed has to respond to it by doing exactly the same thing. We each, then, drank our glass, always with befitting dignity. Up to that point everything was going well.

But we began to tremble on perceiving that each of our table companions was getting ready to do us the same honor. We had the appearance of hares with a pack of dogs on their trail, and the fact is they would soon have had

us in distress if we had allowed them to. But at the third class I took the step of only swallowing a mouthful, and I thus very happily gained what we in France call the end of the dinner, but which is here only the end of the first act.

Most of the dishes being then taken off, they bring lighted candles and weave you very neatly a certain number of cigars on a plate. Each one takes possession of one and, the society enveloping itself in a cloud of smoke, the toasts begin, muscles relax the least little bit, and they give themselves to the heaviest gaiety in the world.

Now you have a fair idea of a formal dinner in America. I confess that during this august ceremony I couldn't keep from laughing in my beard on thinking of the difference 1,500 leagues of sea make in the position of men. I thought of the more than subordinate role that I played in France two months ago and of the comparatively elevated situation in which we were finding ourselves here, the little noise that our mission has made at home and that which it makes here, all because of this little bit of sea-water I just spoke of.

1831: Egypt

The future British prime minister, Benjamin Disraeli, was in Cairo. He wrote to his sister Sarah on this day:

[M]y coffee is boiled with spices, and I finish my last chibouque with a sherbet of pomegranate. Oh the delicious fruits that we have here, and in Syria! Orange gardens miles in extent, citrons, limes, pomegranates; but the most delicious thing in the world is a banana, which is richer than a pineapple.

May 29

OAK APPLE DAY

1660: England

In 1660, the English Parliament declared the 29th of May, the king's birthday,

“to be for ever kept as a day of thanksgiving for our redemption from tyranny and the King’s return to his Government, he entering London that day.” The special day was not formally abandoned until 1859.

The name of the celebration is a reminder of the day in September 1651 when Charles escaped the Roundheads by hiding in a hollow in an oak tree. It became a tradition that Royalists wore an oak sprig or an “oak apple” on this day to demonstrate their allegiance to the crown.

It was traditional on this day for the Chelsea pensioners—the retired military men residing in the Royal Hospital Chelsea—to be treated with roast beef and plum pudding on this day.

A BULLOCK ROAST

1851: England

The *Daily News* carried an advertisement about Alexis Soyer’s new gas cooking apparatus, which was to be demonstrated at the Great Exhibition.

HER MAJESTY’S BIRTHDAY at SOYER’S UNIVERSAL SYMPOSIUM.—A GRAND TABLE D’HOTE BANQUET will be given on SATURDAY NEXT, May 31, in the Encampment of all Nations, which will be opened for the first time in honour of her Majesty’s Birthday, and on which occasion a bullock weighing 140 stone will be roasted in the Pré D’Orsay by M.Soyer’s new gas cooking apparatus. In addition to the innumerable attractions of the Symposium, the Band of the 2nd Life Guards, led by Mr. Grattan Cooke, will attend during the day; and in the evening a Pyrotechnic Display of Illumination of the most novel and brilliant description by Mortram, artist to Her Majesty’s Theatre. Dinner, luncheons, and refreshments of every description from 10 o’clock daily. No charge for admission after 2 o’clock, except by refreshment ticket.

FOOD & WAR

1176: Milan

The Battle of Legnano took place during the time that Milan was under attack

from Frederick of Barbarossa. Things were looking serious for the Milanese when three doves flew out of a nearby church, and shortly afterward, Frederick was defeated. A sweet and delicate yeast cake made in the shape of a dove (*Columba*) has been made in the region since, in recognition of the victory. Over the centuries the bread has become more strongly associated with Easter.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1847: Britain

A patent was granted to Francis Bernhard Bekaert, of Belgium, for “increasing the quantity of cream from milk” and preserving milk.

This was to be achieved by

adding to it, in the proportion of one tablespoonful to two quarts of milk, a liquid prepared by dissolving in one quart of water one ounce of carbonate of soda, to which is added one teaspoonful of a solution of turmeric or curcuma, and three drops of marigold water. Other alkaline substance may be used, and the patentee states that the soda solution will be efficacious without the other ingredients above mentioned. Milk is proposed to be preserved under the patent by adding to one quart of the milk one spoonful of the solution of soda. The milk thus treated is put into a bottle which it should exactly fill, the cork to be secured by wire or string to prevent it flying out. The bottles thus filled are to be placed in a cold bath, the water of which is to be raised to the boiling point, and allowed to cool.

FOOD FIRSTS

1886: USA

The first print advertisement for Coca-Cola appeared in the *Atlanta Journal*, in the section devoted to patent medicines.

COCA-COLA

DELICIOUS!

REFRESHING!

EXHILIRATING!

INVIGORATING!

The New and Popular Soda Fountain Drink, containing the properties of the wonderful Coca plant and the famous Cola nuts. For sale by Willis Venable and Nunally & Rawson.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1789: At Sea

From the journal of Captain William Bligh, written after he and eighteen loyal crewmen were set adrift in an open boat on April 28, 1789 by mutineers aboard HMS *Bounty*.

This day they came ashore at a place he would name Restoration Island—“this being the Day of the Restoration of King Charles the Second, and the name not being inaplicable to my present situation (for it has restored us to fresh life and Strength).”

The previous night they had had their “miserable allowance of a 25th of a pound of bread, and a quarter of a pint of water, for dinner.” They did indeed find themselves restored after a short time on the island.

As we advanced within the reefs, the coast began to shew itself very distinctly Every one was anxious to find something to eat, and I soon heard that there were oysters on the rocks, for the tide was out; but it was nearly dark, and only a few could be gathered. . . .The dawn of day brought greater strength and spirits to us than I expected; for, notwithstanding every one was very weak, there appeared strength sufficient remaining to make me conceive the most favourable hopes of our being able to surmount the difficulties we might yet have to encounter.

The parties were now returned, highly rejoiced at having found plenty of oysters and fresh water. I also had made a fire, by help of a small magnifying glass, that I always carried about me, to read off the divisions of my sextants; and, what was still more fortunate, among the few things which had been thrown into the boat and saved, was a piece of brimstone

which had been thrown into the boat and saved, was a piece of brimstone and a tinder-box, so that I secured fire for the future.

One of my people had been so provident as to bring away with him a copper pot: it was by being in possession of this article that I was enabled to make a proper use of the supply we found, for, with a mixture of bread and a little pork, I made a stew that might have been relished by people of more delicate appetites, of which each person received a full pint.

The oysters we found grew so fast to the rocks that it was with difficulty they could be broke off, and at last we discovered it to be the most expeditious way to open them where they were found. They were very sizeable, and well tasted, and gave us great relief. To add to this happy circumstance, in the hollow of the land there grew some wire grass, which indicated a moist situation. On forcing a stick, about three feet long, into the ground, we found water, and with little trouble dug a well, which produced as much as we were in need of. It was very good, but I could not determine if it was a spring or not.

I had cautioned every one not to touch any kind of berry or fruit that they might find; yet they were no sooner out of my sight than they began to make free with three different kinds, that grew all over the island, eating without any reserve. The symptoms of having eaten too much, began at last to frighten some of them; but on questioning others, who had taken a more moderate allowance, their minds were a little quieted. The others, however, became equally alarmed in their turn, dreading that such symptoms would come on, and that they were all poisoned, so that they regarded each other with the strongest marks of apprehension, uncertain what would be the issue of their imprudence. Happily the fruit proved wholesome and good. One sort grew on a small delicate kind of vine; they were the size of a large gooseberry, and very like in substance, but had only a sweet taste; the skin was a pale red, streaked with yellow the long way of the fruit: it was pleasant and agreeable. Another kind grew on bushes, like that which is called the sea-side grape in the West Indies; but the fruit was very different, and more like elder-berries, growing in clusters in the same manner. The third sort was a black berry, not in such plenty as the others, and resembled a bullace, or large kind of sloe, both in size and taste. Seeing these fruits eaten by the birds made me consider them fit for use, and those who had already tried the experiment, not finding any bad effect, made it a certainty that we might eat of them without danger.

1841: Australia

From the journal of Edward John Eyre (1815–1901) on an expedition into the inland of Central Australia:

During the day Wylie had caught two opossums, and as these were entirely the fruit of his own labour and skill, I did not interfere in their disposal; I was curious, moreover, to see how far I could rely upon his kindness and generosity, should circumstances ever compel me to depend upon him for a share of what he might procure. At night, therefore, I sat philosophically watching him whilst he proceeded to get supper ready, as yet ignorant whether I was to partake of it or not. After selecting the largest of the two animals, he prepared and cooked it, and then put away the other where he intended to sleep. I now saw that he had not the remotest intention of giving any to me, and asked him what he intended to do with the other one. He replied that he should be hungry in the morning, and meant to keep it until then. Upon hearing this I told him that his arrangements were very good, and that for the future I would follow the same system also; and that each should depend upon his own exertions in procuring food; hinting to him that as he was so much more skilful than I was, and as we had so very little flour left, I should be obliged to reserve this entirely for myself, but that I hoped he would have no difficulty in procuring as much food as he required. I was then about to open the flour-bag and take a little out for my supper, when he became alarmed at the idea of getting no more, and stopped me, offering the other opossum, and volunteering to cook it properly for me. Trifling as this little occurrence was, it read me a lesson of caution, and taught me what value was to be placed upon the assistance or kindness of my companion, should circumstances ever place me in a situation to be dependent upon him; I felt a little hurt too, at experiencing so little consideration from one whom I had treated with the greatest kindness, and who had been clothed and fed upon my bounty, for the last fifteen months.

1861: Australia

From the notes and journals of members of the ill-fated Burke and Wills expedition to cross Australia from south to north, in 1860–1861. On this day, Wills wrote:

VILLS WLOC.

Started at seven o'clock, and went on to the duck holes, where we breakfasted coming down. Halted there at thirty minutes past nine for a feed, and then moved on. At the stones saw a lot of crows quarrelling about something near the water. Found it to be a large fish, of which they had eaten a considerable portion. Finding it quite fresh and good, I decided the quarrel by taking it with me. It proved a most valuable addition to my otherwise scanty supper of nardoo porridge.

1953: Mt. Everest

Mt. Everest was conquered for the first time by Edmund Hilary and Tenzing Norgay: "We made seats for ourselves in the snow, and sitting there in reasonable comfort we ate with relish a bar of mintcake."

The celebratory treat referred to by Hilary was a confection known as Kendal Mint Cake, a specialty from England's Lake District. It is said that its invention was a mistake. A local confectioner making clear "glacier mints" cooked the sugar syrup a little too long, and it started to form crystals again and became cloudy. The batch was not discarded but became a new sweet in the form of a frosty opaque slab. The company achieved national fame when it was asked at short notice to provide the mintcake for the Everest expedition.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1737: Shalstone House, Buckinghamshire, England

Elizabeth Purefoy wrote to her supplier in the city, about the fish she had recently received:

I was in hopes by this time Mr ffisher would have sent some mackerell according to my order, but since noone are come the weather is now so exceeding hot that what ffish you sent last week stank & could not be eat, so I desire you would not send any more fish till further orders.

1849: USA

From the journal of John W. Griffith, traveling on foot from Baja California to

San Diego. He had been aboard the *Dolphin*, bound for San Diego, most of its passengers heading for the California goldfields. They were put ashore on the 28th of May when it seemed that the leaky and badly provisioned boat would not make the journey, and they arrived in San Diego on June 24.

We came to a very high mountain, which it seemed necessary that we must cross. As we came nearer, we found a deep ravine interposed, and into this we must go. It seemed an almost hopeless undertaking; we had to get down by holding on to whatever we could and by jumping from rock to rock. When part of the way down, we saw a stream of water. In their eagerness to reach it, many of the men threw away their baggage to lighten their loads—blankets, shirts; some even dumped their rice on the ground, which others in our party, more provident or more destitute, picked up. Every ounce of supplies was a pound to us, weak from hunger, from seasickness on shipboard, and from the oppressive heat of this country. Our trail could be traced by the articles we were throwing away.

1857: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau:

I think I have noticed that coarse-natured farmers' boys, etc., have not a sufficiently fine and delicate taste to appreciate a high-flavored apple. It is commonly too acid for them, and they prefer some tame, sweet thing, fit only for baking, as a pumpkin sweetening.

1874: At Sea

From the diary of James Anderson McLauchlan, a Scot aged twenty-one years, en route to Australia aboard the *City of Adelaide*:

[B]y 10 a.m. we were under weigh for Plymouth where we were to take in the most of our Passengers. . . . Soon after we were called down to dinner, which was the signal to commence to our regular routine of duty. We were all divided off into Messes of 9 each with a Captain over each, whose duty it was to get the provisions and give each his portion . . . but our Mess agreed to take turn about at it. Well we had dinner, which consisted of Broth, Roast Beef and potatoes—a very fair start. We were only sorry that it was to last for a very limited period (they are obliged to give us fresh

provisions always when in the vicinity of any Port that is if it is possible to land). After dinner we agreed that two of us should take day about washing dishes[;] . . . you would laugh to see us awkward fellows with our shirtsleeves up doing the slop work. . . . We reached Gravesend about 6 o'clock where it seems we have to wait for some time for our Captain and the Government Inspector. As soon as we cast anchor the bell rang for Tea which consisted of Tea and plain bread and butter. . . . About 9 we went below to bed.

May 30

IN THE NEWS

1995

On this day the *New York Times* ran an article about celestial alcohol: “Using one of the world’s largest radiotelescopes, British scientists have analyzed an interstellar gas cloud and calculated that it contains enough alcohol to make 400 trillion trillion pints of beer.”

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

1604: South America

The Inquisition took particular note of the consumption of chocolate as evidence in its investigations. In Spain, chocolate manufacture and consumption was associated with the Jews who were a major target of the Inquisition, but it was also strongly debated by the Catholic Church as to whether the drinking of chocolate would break a period of fasting, such as is required before taking communion.

On May 30, 1604, a possible offence was brought to the notice of the Inquisition authorities:

Francisco Sanchez Enriquez came on his own account to make a confession. He is an honest man, I know him. Your Lordship will see what to do with him, but I do not think we need to examine his wife. He is a sick and old man [and he said] that he had received the sacrament of the Holy

Eucharist without remembering he had drunk a cup of chocolate.

Signed El Canónigo Santiago

MEALS ON WHEELS

2002: Wales

Pembrokeshire County Council's Meals on Wheels service provided a special meal to its four hundred clients in celebration of the Queen's Jubilee. The menu included chicken breast poached in wine and cream with leeks and Jubilee cherry tarte. A specially printed souvenir menu card accompanied each meal.

Meals on Wheels originated in Britain during the Blitz, in World War II, when many had lost their homes in bombing raids. The first delivery took place in Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, in 1943. After the war, the program was developed in many countries to deliver meals to aged or infirm housebound persons.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1789: Restoration Island

From the journal of Captain William Bligh who had been set adrift in an open boat with eighteen loyal seamen on April 18, 1789, by the mutineers aboard HMS *Bounty*. They have been replenishing themselves and their stores on Restoration Island.

Saturday, May the 30th. Very fine weather, and E S E winds. This afternoon I sent parties out again to gather oysters, with which and some of the inner part of the palm-top, we made another good stew for supper, each person receiving a full pint and a half; but I refused bread to this meal, for I considered our wants might yet be very great, and as such I represented the necessity of saving our principal support whenever it was in our power.

At night we again divided, and one half of us slept on shore by a good fire. In the morning I discovered a visible alteration in every one for the better, and I sent them away again to gather oysters. I had now only two pounds of

pork left. This article, which I could not keep under lock and key as I did the bread, had been pilfered by some inconsiderate person, but every one most solemnly denied it; I therefore resolved to put it out of their power for the future, by sharing what remained for our dinner. While the party was out getting oysters, I got the boat in readiness for sea, and filled all our water vessels, which amounted to nearly 60 gallons.

The party being returned, dinner was soon ready, and every one had as good an allowance as they had for supper; for with the pork I gave an allowance of bread; as I was determined forthwith to push on. As it was not yet noon, I told every one that an exertion should be made to gather as many oysters as possible for a sea store, as I was determined to sail in the afternoon.

1817: Australia

From John Oxley's journal of his expedition in 1817 to explore the course of the Lachlan River:

At seven o'clock I proceeded to the north-east with two men, whilst Mr. Evans went to the north-west. At ten I was fortunate enough to fall in with the horses about eight miles from our camp; returned with them, and prepared every thing for setting forward tomorrow morning. In one of the bushes an emu's nest was found, containing ten eggs; our dogs also killed two small birds. Mr. Evans returned about three o'clock, having seen nothing remarkable: the country was very thick and brushy, and he was much impeded by creeping vines.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1667: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

After dinner I walked to Arundell House, the way very dusty, the day of meeting of the Society [the London Society of Arts and Science] the Duchesse of Newcastle, who had desired to be invited to the Society. . . . Several fine experiments were shown her of colours, loadstones,

microscopes, and of liquors among others, of one that did, while she was there, turn a piece of roasted mutton into pure blood, which was very rare.

May 31

LAUNCHING THE *TITANIC*

1911: Ireland

A banquet was held at the Grand Central Hotel, Belfast, to celebrate the launch of the *Titanic*. The menu read as follows:

DINNER UPON THE OCCASION OF THE LAUNCH

OF THE WHITE STAR LINER

'TITANIC'

(45,000 TONS)

—

MENU

Sardines á Imperiale.

-

Consomme Petite Marmite

-

Saumon natural. Sauce Mouselline.

Concombre.

-

Chaufroid de Volaille en Aspic

-

Filet de Mouton á la Sargent

Pommes Fridal. Chouxfleur.

-

Cailles sur Canapes.

Pommes Château

Salade.

-

Macedoine des Fruits en Gelle.

-

Foie de Poulet et Lard.

-

Glace Pralinée.

-

Dessert

-

Café

FOOD & WAR

1941: USA & Britain, World War II

The first shipment of food from the United States of America, provided under

the Lend-Lease agreement, arrived in Britain on this day.

Lord Woolton, the food minister, boarded the ship and thanked Henry Harriman, the “expeditor” of the American law. Woolton was eager to taste the cheese, which was at that time strictly rationed in Britain. The *Times* reported that “smacking his lips, he devoured his week’s ration on the spot.” The newspaper added that “[d]ockmen too were delighted with the cargo, and received a 20-pound cheese ‘to be taken off the ration.’”

The shipment included 120,000 pounds of cheese, 1,000 tons of flour, 4,000 eggs and 36,000 crates of canned grape and fruit juice from Texas. There was another, unexpected piece of cargo reported by the *Times*:

In another package, and totally unexpected, came more food for Britain, from America.

The ministry of supply and ordnance, opening three cases of machine tools from the United States, found 24 tins of evaporate milk. With them was a note: “Employees of the Jones Machine Tool Works at Cincinnati send this box to employes where this machine is sent. The milk is intended for your children, and has been sent without the knowledge of the purchasers of these tools or any agent connected with the same.

The Lend and Lease Act was passed by Congress on March 11, 1941, before the United States entered the war, to provide aid for the Allied nations. The first shipment was on its way to Greece the same day, before the Appropriation Bill was put to Congress. It was passed in record time, and without amendment, on March 24.

In the first year alone, over one million tons of food had been sent overseas, and by the end of the war, \$50 billion in aid in various forms (military and industrial items as well as food) had been distributed to forty-four countries.

FOOD FIRSTS

1892: Britain

Lea & Perrins were granted trademark registration for “Lea & Perrins Worcestershire Sauce” in the category Sauce for Roast Meats, Steaks, Cutlets,

Chops, Fish, Curries, Gravies, Game, and Soup. The stated date of first use was 1874.

The exact recipe for the condiment remains a mystery. The label on the original Worcestershire sauce bottle stated that it was “from the recipe of a nobleman of the country.” Most versions say the “nobleman” returned from India with a recipe that he asked the local apothecaries (Lea & Perrins) to make up, which they did. Unfortunately, when they tasted it, it was awful. Thankfully, they did not dispose of the barrels, but left them forgotten in the cellar. A long time later, the barrels were rediscovered, and their contents tasted again. Amazingly, fermentation and chemistry had done their work and the sauce was deliciously piquant. A new condiment was born and became a staple in English kitchens and on English tables.

1937: USA

The trademark SPAM™ was registered on this day.

PASTA

1351: Italy

Two *lasagnarii* (lasagne makers) were signed on on this day as pasta cooks for the crew of a Genoese ship sailed by the famous admiral Paganino Doria.

FOOD & THE LAW

1517: England

A sumptuary law came into effect during the reign of Henry VIII that attempted to restrict the indulgence in “excessive fare.”

Prouysion made by the Kynges hyghnes and his counsayll for puttynge aparte the excessyue fare and redusyng the same to such moderacion as folowyngly ensueth thobseruance whereof to begyn the laste daye of May the; ix; yere of the raygne of the Kyng nowe our Soueraynge lorde Henry the; viii.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1789: At Sea

From the journal of Captain William Bligh, written after he and eighteen loyal crewmen were set adrift in an open boat on April 28, 1789, by mutineers aboard HMS *Bounty*. They left Restoration Island on this day.

Early in the [previous] afternoon, the people returned with the few oysters they had time to pick up, and every thing was put into the boat. I then examined the quantity of bread remaining, and found 38 days allowance, according to the last mode of issuing a 25th of a pound at breakfast and at dinner. . . . I directed my course within two small islands that lie to the north of Restoration Island, . . . but by eleven o'clock at night I found myself mistaken: for we met with low land, which inclined to the N E; so that at three o'clock in the morning I found we were embayed, which obliged us to stand back to the southward.

At day-break I was exceedingly surprised to find the appearance of the country all changed.

. . . An island of good height now bore N 1/2 W, four miles from us, at which I resolved to see what could be got, and from thence to take a look at the coast. At this isle I landed about eight o'clock in the morning.

The parties continued collecting what could be found, which consisted of some fine oysters and clams, and a few small dog-fish that were caught in the holes of the rocks. We also found about two tons of rain-water in the hollow of the rocks, on the north part of the island, so that of this essential article we were again so happy as not to be in want.

I named this Sunday Island.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1841: Australia



Witchetty grub

(UIG/Getty Images)

From the journal of Edward John Eyre (1815–1901) on an expedition into the inland of Central Australia:

As soon as we were fairly over [a river] I halted for the night, to rest myself and give Wylie an opportunity of looking for food. The water in both branches of this river was only brackish where we crossed, and at that which we encamped upon but slightly so. There were many grass-trees in the vicinity, and as several of these had been broken down and were dead they were full of the white grubs of which the natives are so fond. From these Wylie enjoyed a plentiful, and to him, luxurious supper. I could not bring myself to try them, preferring the root of the broad flag-reed, which, for the first time, we met with at this stream, and which is an excellent and nutritious article of food. This root being dug up, and roasted in hot ashes, yields a great quantity of a mealy farinaceous powder interspersed among the fibres; it is of an agreeable flavour, wholesome, and satisfying to the appetite. In all parts of Australia, even where other food abounds, the root of this reed is a favourite and staple article of diet among the aborigines. The proper season of the year for procuring it in full perfection, is after the

floods have receded, and the leaves have died away and been burnt off. It is that species of reed of which the leaves are used by coopers for closing up crevices between the staves of their casks.

The “grubs” which Eyre referred to are the larvae of several species of moths. They are commonly known as witchetty (or wijuti) grubs. The larvae feed on sap from the roots of two species of Acacia, and are found in tunnels in the earth around the tree.

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt’s journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

There was another small tree, the branches of which were thickly covered with bright green leaves; it had round inferior fruit, about half an inch in diameter, which was full of seeds: when ripe, it was slightly pulpy and acidulous, and reminded me of the taste of the coarse German rye bread. In consequence of this resemblance, we called this little tree the Bread tree of. . . . We used the last of our salt at the last camp; and what we should do without it, was a question of considerable interest. As I had never taken salt with me in my reconnoitring expeditions, and had never felt the want of it with dried beef, either grilled or raw, I recommended my companions to eat their meat in the same state; and, in fact, good dry beef, without any farther preparation, was much relished by all of us: for, when grilled, it became ashy and burnt, particularly when without fat; and, if stewed, although it yielded a good broth, it became tough and tasteless. The meat of the last bullock was very hard and juiceless, and something was to be done to soften it, and make it palatable: as we had no fat, we frequently steamed it with water, but this rendered it tough, without facilitating in the least the mastication; and its fibres, entering between our teeth, rendered them exceedingly tender, and caused us much pain. After a week’s trial, and several experiments, we returned to our former practice of stewing it, and in a very short time relished it as much without salt, as we had formerly done with it.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1732: Lapland

The botanist Carl von Linné visited Lapland in 1732, on behalf of the Royal Society.

The divine service of this day being over, I left Lycksele, taking with me only three loaves of bread, and some reindeer tongues, by way of provision. I presumed that I should procure among the Laplanders flesh of the reindeer, cheese, milk, fish, fowl, &c. Nor, indeed, could I well take anything more at present; for, whenever we came at any shoals or falls in the river, it was necessary for my companion to take our boat on his head, over mountains and valleys, so that I had not only my own luggage to carry at such times, but his likewise.

1811: USA

From *Journal of a Voyage up the Missouri River in 1811* by Henry Marie Brackenridge:

This morning, contrary wind, and some rain. Proceeded with the cordelle. In the course of the day, saw a large flock of antelopes—they appear to be numerous in this part of the country. Observed in the sand, a number of Indian tracks, and a place, where it appeared that the boats of Mr. Hunt had stopped with the Indians some time. One of our men discovered a curious place, contrived by the Indians, for taking fish, it was something like a large fish basket—we found two fine catfish in it.

1811: England

Jane Austen wrote to her sister, Cassandra, from Chawton:

Poor Anna is also suffering from her cold, which is worse to-day, but as she has no sore throat I hope it may spend itself by Tuesday. She had a delightful evening with the Miss Middletons—syllabub, tea, coffee, singing, dancing, a hot supper, eleven o'clock, everything that can be imagined agreeable.

. . . I continue to like our old cook quite as well as ever, and, but that I am afraid to write in her praise, I could say that she seems just the servant for

us. Her cookery is at least tolerable; her pastry is the only deficiency.

1844: USA

From the American journals of Nathaniel Hawthorne:

I get along admirably, and am at this moment superintending the corned beef, which has been on the fire, as it appears to me, ever since the beginning of time, and shows no symptom of being done before the crack of doom. Mrs Hale says it must boil till it becomes tender; and so it shall, if I can find wood to keep the fire a-going. . . . Meantime, I keep my station in the dining-room, and read or write as composedly as in my own study. Just now, there came a very important rap at the front door, and I threw down a smoked herring which I had begun to eat, as there is no hope of the corned beef to-day, and went to admit the visitor.

June

June 1

The Kalends of Beans

In ancient Rome, the kalends (first days) of June were sacred to Carna, ancient goddess of family life and the physical body. The traditional offerings to her were bean-meal and lard, because these were staple, nourishing foods of the time. Among the poor, this day was known as the *Kalendae fabariae*, or the kalends of bean-eating.

In the words of the Roman poet, Ovid, in ancient times:

Pigs were prized; men feasted on slaughtered swine;

The earth only yielded beans and hard grains.

They say that whoever eats these two foods together

At the Kalends, in this sixth month, will have sweet digestion.

THORNLESS CACTUS

1907: USA

Luther Burbank published *The New Agricultural-Horticultural Opuntias: Plant Creations for Arid Regions*. Burbank's hope was to make the deserts around the world bloom with a prolific new food for cattle (and humans)—a hybrid version of the prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia ficus*) but without the thorns. His idea captured the imagination and the financial investments of many people, but it turned out to be a craze, not an agricultural revolution, and made a fortune for no one.

A HUGE LOAF

1814: Burton, England

Hone's Everyday Book included the following article relating to this day:

A newspaper of this day notices that the Tuesday preceding was observed at Burton, in Dorsetshire, as a great festival, in consequence of the arrival at that place of a vat of Hambro' yarn, from London, being the first that had come into the town for many years. The inhabitants met the waggon, took out the horse, decorated the vat with ribands, and various emblems of peace, plenty, trade and commerce, and drew the same through the village, preceded by a flag and band of music, amidst the acclamations of thousands, many of whom were regaled with bread, cheese, and strong beer: one loaf (among others) baked for the occasion, claimed the admiration of every one present; its length being six feet three inches, breadth twenty-one inches, depth fourteen inches, and its weight considerably above 100 lbs. To explain the occasion of this rejoicing, it is necessary to state that Burton, as a manufacturing place, had suffered under the privation which was felt more or less throughout the British dominions, by Buonaparte declaring them to be in a state of blockade. By this decree, from the continent of Europe being within his power, he was enabled to injure and derange the industry and commerce of our artisans and merchants to an extent that was not contemplated. They have happily been liberated by an unlooked-for, and wonderful, combination of circumstances; nor so long as good faith and wise dispositions prevail, can they be prevented from arriving to a height of prosperity unparalleled in our annals.

FOOD & POLITICS

1901: USA

Several newspapers reported the banning of foreign beef from British Army contracts:

The department of agriculture has received a dispatch from a prominent packing company of Chicago announcing that they have just been advised that the English government has excluded all beef except home-bred beef from the British army contracts. This, it is stated, is to be effective June [1st] next.

The Chicago concern has asked the agricultural department for any assistance it can render. It has pointed out that the action of the British government is a severe blow to American beef and cattle exporters and producers and means not alone the loss in government trade, but it is feared it will serve very materially toward inciting a prejudice on the part of the people of Great Britain against the beef and cattle of this country.

RESTAURANTS & HOTELS

1898: Paris, France

The Paris Ritz opened on this day. The famous bar at the hotel is named for Ernest

Hemingway, who was on active service in France (see August 24), and claimed to have been the one to liberate the hotel at the end of the war. He said afterward, "When I dream of afterlife in heaven, the action always takes place at the Paris Ritz."

The mimosa cocktail was invented at the Ritz in 1925, and quickly became the fashionable drink of the social set. It is a mixture of champagne, orange juice, and Grand Marnier.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1875: USA

African American Alexander P. Ashbourne, of Oakland, California, received Patent No. 163,962 for an "Improvement in Processes for Preparing Cocoa-Nut for Domestic Use." His method involved steaming the grated coconut for three or four hours until it was cooked, after which it was pressed perfectly dry, and then sugar was added in the proportion of one pound of sugar to three pounds of coconut meat. A small amount of cinnamon was added "and this has the effect to preserve the flavour." The compound was then thoroughly dried and packed, and "if properly done, will keep and retain its flavor for years without any depreciation."

1920: USA

The first patent for an ice cream cone was granted to Ernest A. Hamwi, of St. Louis, Missouri. Patent No. 1,342,045 was for “a new form of pastry cone, and the apparatus for making the same.” Hamwi claimed that his apparatus would eliminate the ragged edges commonly produced by earlier machines.

FOOD FIRSTS

1495: Scotland

The first written record of Scotch whiskey appeared in the Exchequer Rolls of Scotland. It was distilled by a friar called John Cor, and was called *aqua vitae* (Latin for “water of life”).

1899: Naples, Italy

It is traditionally held that the Pizza Margherita was invented on this day in honor of the visit of Queen Margherita. It is said that the royal couple wished to pay homage to the local cuisine and asked for pizza. The baker topped the dough with the colors of the flag of Italy—white from buffalo-milk mozzarella, red from tomatoes, and green from basil leaves.

EXPLORERS & FOOD

1841: Australia

From the journal of Edward John Eyre (1815–1901) on an expedition into the inland of Central Australia: “At night we made our supper of the flag-roots we had brought with us, and a spoonful of flour a-piece, boiled into a paste. The night was very cold and windy, and having neither shelter nor fire-wood at the sand-drifts where we were, we spent it miserably.” The next day Eyre and Wylie sight, and manage to catch the attention of, the French whaler *Mississippi*, under the command of Captain Rossiter.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1789: Britain

From the diary of John Burgoyne, 5th Viscount Torrington, written during his

FROM THE DIARIES OF JOHN BYNG, 5TH VISCOUNT TORRINGTON, WRITTEN DURING HIS HORSEBACK TOURS OF ENGLAND AND WALES:

Bedford, June 1st 1789. My Host, of the true fat Breed, said Dinner was just ready, and instantly brought in a Roasted Fillet of Mutton with Cabbage, Cucumbers, and Sallad; and upon this, and Cheese, I fared very well.

- For Dinner 10d.
- Brandy 6
- Hay and Cirb 4
- Servants 4
- —
- 2 0
- Très bonne Marché

June 2

A CORONATION DINNER

1953: London, England

The coronation of Queen Elizabeth II took place on this day. Several official banquets were scheduled over the next few days, but immediately after the exhausting ceremony, the queen and her family sat down to a simple meal at Buckingham Palace.

Consommé Royale

(Chicken Consommé garnished with cubes of egg custard.)

Filet de Boeuf Mascotte

(Fillet of Beef garnished with quarters of artichoke bottoms,
tossed in butter with cocotte potatoes and slices of truffle.)

Salade

(Salad)

Glace a la Mangue

(Mango Ice-Cream)

In 1953 the R.A.F. Catering Corps reestablished an old tradition and made a lamprey pie as a gift to the queen on her coronation. It contained lampreys, hard-boiled eggs and an aspic jelly flavored with claret, and required 4.5 kg of flour for the pastry.

A BEER-THEMED LUNCH

1937: USA

The Wisconsin newspaper, the *Rhineland Daily News* of June 2, 1937, printed the following article about a promotional activity on the part of the United Brewers Industrial Foundation:

Some of the foundation's ineffable squibs of information would seem to indicate that the beer-makers press agents have been sampling something stronger than the mild amber fluid manufactured by their employers. Witness the latest creation of the foundation's press contact men—a blurb for the use of beer in cooking which asserts: "Recipes which excited the interest and enthusiasm of the guests at the luncheon included such exotic and wholesome items as melon balls with beer dressing, beef kidney with beef, beer bread, sweet potatoes in beer, beer cabbage slaw, beer sauce on asparagus, potato salad with beer dressing, jellied vegetable salad containing beer, beer spice cake, chocolate beer cake, and for pure liquid delight, beer with eggs!" (exclamation point ours.)

These proclaimed "exotic" creations impelled a recheck on the meaning of "exotic." The Webster unabridged dictionary gives these meanings: "not native, extraneous, foreign."

“Exotic” is the word. It is hoped, for the sake of peace and quiet at dinner time, that melon balls with beer, sweet potatoes in beer, beer cabbage slaw, and all the rest of these beery innovations will remain “not native, extraneous, foreign.

1641: America

The first “exclusive right” for a new device or product granted in North America was to Samuel Winslow by the Massachusetts General Court, for a new process for making salt. There were no patent laws at this time in the new colony.

Whereas Samu: Winslow hath made a position to this Court to furnish the country wth salt at more easy rated than otherwise can be had, & to make it by a meanes & wayw^{ch} hitherto hath not bene discov^rd, it is therefore ordered, that if the daid Samu: shall wthin the space of one yeare, set upon the said worke, hee shall enjoy the same, to him & his associat^s, for the space of 10 yeares, so as it shall not bee lawfull to any other pson to make salt after the same way during the said yeares; pvided, nev^rthelesse, that it shall be lawfull for any pson to bring in any salt, or to make any salt after any oth^r way, dureing the said tearme.

1928: USA

The Kraft Company created Velveeta Cheese. Processed cheese had been invented by James L. Kraft in 1916, and his business empire had been steadily growing since that time. The processing involves one or more types of cheese being combined with an emulsifying agent, and agitated and heated until a homogeneous plastic mass is formed. The maturation process is then halted (which also halts flavor development also) and the “cheese” has a long shelf-life.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1806: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day Meriwether Lewis wrote:

Having exhausted all our merchandize we are obliged to have recourse to every subterfuge in order to prepare in the most ample manner in our power to meet that wretched portion of our journey, the Rocky Mountains, where hunger and cold in their most rigorous forms assail the w[e]aried traveller; not any of us have yet forgotten our suffering in those mountains in September last, and I think it probable we never shall.

. . . Sergt. Ordway Frazier and Wizer returned with 17 salmon. . . [T]he distance was so great from which they had brought the fish that most of them were nearly spoiled. [T]hese fish were as fat as any I ever saw; sufficiently so to cook themselves without the addition of grease; those which were sound were extremely delicious; their flesh of a fine rose colour with a small admixture of yellow.

1861: Australia

From the notes and journals of members of the ill-fated Burke and Wills expedition to cross Australia from south to north in 1860–1861. On this day, Wills wrote:

Started at half-past six, thinking to breakfast at the blacks' camp, . . . found myself very much fagged and did not arrive at their camp until ten a.m., and then found myself disappointed as to a good breakfast, the camp being deserted. Having rested awhile, and eaten a few fish-bones, I moved down the creek, hoping by a late march to be able to reach our own camp, but I soon found, from my extreme weakness, that that would be out of the question. A certain amount of good luck, however, still stuck to me, for, on going along by a large waterhole, I was so fortunate as to find a large fish, about a pound and a half in weight, which was just being choked by another which it had tried to swallow, but which had stuck in its throat. I soon had a fire lit, and both of the fish cooked and eaten. The large one was in good condition. Moving on again after my late breakfast, I passed Camp 67 of the journey to Carpentaria, and camped for the night under some polygonum bushes.

BEAVERS' TAILS

1795: America

George Turner wrote to George Washington on this day. He sent Washington a gift of a buffalo robe and some beaver tails. He included the following recipe with the letter:

Canadian Recipe for Dressing Beavers' Tails

First boil the Tail till it becomes soft & then broil it upon a gridiron until the fat or oil of it exudes in every direction. After this spread over the whole a coat composed of fine crumbs of bread & parsley, chopped very fine. Again lay it upon the gridiron till it becomes brown and crisp. In this state serve it up with vinegar salt and pepper.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1660: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

All the afternoon with two or three captains in the Captain's cabin, drinking of white wine and sugar and eating pickled oysters—where Capt. Sparling told us the best Story that I ever hear; about a gentleman that persuaded a country fellow to let him gut his oysters or else they would stink.

1663: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys. Pepys summoned his cellarmaster on this day, with the intention of broaching the tierce of claret which he had stored. They were to go down to his cellar “and consult about the drawing of it. There to my great vexation I find that the cellar door hath long been kept unlocked and about half of the wine drunk! I was deadly mad at it and examined my people round, but nobody would confess it.”

1728: England

John Baptist Grano was a musician and contemporary of Handel. He spent from May 1728 to September 1729 in the infamous Marshalsea prison for an unpaid debt of £99. A prisoner's comfort at that time very much depended on how much he or she could purchase for themselves, or arrange to have sent in to them. They could even entertain others to meals, as Grano's diary of the time shows:

could even entertain others to meals, as Grant's diary of the time shows: "Sunday Morn June the 2d got up about 6 ate some raw milk & Bread for Breakfast. . . . I joyn'd with the above Gentlemen for Dinner and had a few Mackerell, and some of ye usual Drink."

1844: USA

From the American journals of Nathaniel Hawthorne. He enjoyed flapjacks.

Concord, The Old Manse. At the time of writing my last letter, I was without bread. Well, just at supper-time came Mrs. B—— with a large covered dish, which proved to contain a quantity of specially good flapjacks, piping hot, prepared, I suppose, by the fair hands of Miss Martha or Miss Abby, for Mrs. P—— was not at home. They served me both for supper and breakfast; and I thanked Providence and the young ladies, and compared myself to the prophet fed by ravens,—though the simile does rather more than justice to myself, and not enough to the generous donors of the flapjacks. The next morning, Mrs. P—— herself brought two big loaves of bread, which will last me a week, unless I have some guests to provide for. I have likewise found a hoard of crackers in one of the covered dishes; so that the old castle is sufficiently provisioned to stand a long siege. The corned beef is exquisitely done, and as tender as a young lady's heart, all owing to my skilful cookery; for I consulted Mrs Hale at every step, and precisely followed her directions. To say the truth, I look upon it as such a masterpiece in its way, that it seems irreverential to eat it. Things on which so much thought and labor are bestowed should surely be immortal.

1849: USA

From the journal of John W. Griffith, traveling on foot from Baja California to San Diego:

I upset my flask and had no water. I cut open the Turk's-head cactus with my hatchet and ate the pulp, which reminded me of watermelon. My only food now was the fruit of the prickly pear. My mouth and hands were full of its fine thorns, but the fruit was nutritious.

Near sundown one of the men saw a horse. We could not catch him, so we

drove him down into a ravine where there was water and shot him. We skinned the wretched, worn-out creature and ate enough of the flesh to satisfy our hunger. We cured some meat by roasting it on coals.

Finding the old horse, which had evidently been driven away to die, saved the life of Houghton's bull dog. The only reason we had not eaten him before was that his master was so attached to the dog that he shared with him his short rations of food and water.

June 3

EATING TO EXTINCTION

1844: Iceland

The last two surviving great auks (and their egg) were destroyed by an expedition of fourteen men on this day on the Island of Eldey, off Iceland. The birds and eggs had been hunted as a good source of food by fishermen and explorers for centuries.

FIRE-EATING

1633: England

The earliest mention of a public fire-eater in England occurs in a letter from Sir Henry Wotton, an English author and politician, to Sir Edmund Bacon on this date:

Let me add to these a strange thing to be seen in London for a couple of pence, which I know not whether I should call a piece of art or nature: it is an Englishman, like some swabber of a ship, come from the Indies, where he has learned to eat fire as familiarly as ever I saw any eat cakes, even whole glowing brands, which he will crush with his teeth and swallow. I believe he had been hard famished in the Tierra del Fuego, on the south of the Magellan strait.

CLUB SANDWICHES

1937: Britain

Wallis Simpson and the former King Edward VIII were married on this day, six months after he gave up his throne for her. In her later memoir *The Heart Has Its Reasons*, Wallis wrote of her contribution to the menu at Balmoral:

My contribution to the traditional grandeur at Balmoral was the introduction of the three-decker toasted sandwich as a late supper item, after the movies. This proved so popular that it created a minor crisis in the kitchen through the heavy demand for repeat orders. I am sure that this innovation, so patently mine, hardly endeared the new reign to the household staff.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1787: Canary Islands

The First Fleet, three weeks out of England en route to Australia with its cargo of convicts, called in at Tenerife in the Canary Islands to take on fresh water and vegetables. One of the officers, Marine Captain Watkin Tench recorded this: “During our short stay we had every day some fresh proof of his Excellency’s esteem and attention, and had the honour of dining with him, in a style of equal elegance and splendour.”

Later on the voyage, James Campbell, the captain of marines aboard one of the ships, the *Lady Penrhyn*, wrote of the monotonous diet.

Our allowance is very scanty. . . . I know not why, or whither it was so intended by administration that the only difference between the allowance of provisions served to the officer & served to the convict, be only half a pint (per day) of vile Rio spirits, so offensive both in taste & smell that he must be fond of drinking indeed that can use it—but such is the fact.

1861: Australia

From the notes and journals of members of the ill-fated Burke and Wills expedition to cross Australia from south to north in 1860–1861. On this day, Wills wrote:

Started at seven o'clock, and, keeping on the south bank of the creek, was rather encouraged, at about three miles, by the sound of numerous crows ahead; presently fancied I could see smoke, and was shortly afterwards set at my ease by hearing a cooey from Pitchery, who stood on the opposite bank, and directed me around the lower end of the waterhole, continually repeating his assurance of abundance of fish and bread. Having with some considerable difficulty managed to ascend the sandy path that led to the camp, I was conducted by the chief to a fire, where a large pile of fish were just being cooked in the most approved style. [T]hese I imagined to be for the general consumption of the half a dozen natives gathered around, but it turned out that they had already had their breakfast. I was expected to dispose of this lot—a task which, to my own astonishment, I soon accomplished, keeping two or three blacks pretty steadily at work extracting the bones for me. The fish being disposed of, next came a supply of nardoo cake and water, until I was so full as to be unable to eat any more, when Pitchery allowing me a short time to recover myself, fetched a large bowl of the raw nardoo flour, mixed to a thin paste—a most insinuating article, and one that they appear to esteem a great delicacy. I was then invited to stop the night there, but this I declined, and proceeded on my way home.

DINNER-TABLE DIPLOMACY

2000: Moscow, Russia

President Clinton and Russian president Vladimir Putin met over dinner at the Kremlin. While they discussed matters of international security, international economics and U.S.-Russian economic relations, they enjoyed a meal that included blini, cold spicy boiled wild boar, baked stag ham, cabbage soup, trout, goose, and ice cream.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1667: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

[W]alked a turn or two with Sir Wm. Doyly, who did lay a wager with me

the Treasurer-ship would be in one hand before Christmas; on which we did lay a pole of ling, a brace of carps, and a pottle of wine, and Sir W. Penn and Mr. Scowen to be at the eating of them, . . . so I back again to Deptford and there find them just sat down; and so I down with them and we had a good dinner of plain meat, and a good company at our Table.

A *pottle* is an old liquid measure amounting to two quarts. The word also applies to a tankard holding this quantity.

1732: Lapland

From *A Tour in Lapland* by botanist Carl von Linné:

I could not help thinking how miserably I might have to end my days here, in case he should think proper to desert me entirely. At length, however, he returned, bringing with him a little black-looking woman, whose hair hung loose about her shoulders, with a red cap upon her head. I scarcely think that any poet could have described a fury so hideous as this woman. She addressed me in Swedish to the following effect. “Oh, thou poor man! [W]hat misfortune can have brought thee into my country? Seest thou what miserable living we have? I have never yet seen any stranger here in summer. Whence dost thou come, and whither dost thou intend to go?” Having tasted nothing for four days past but a little fresh fish, without any bread, I asked her, seeing a small kettle in her hand, what she could give me to eat. She immediately set about boiling a pike which she had brought with her; but when I was going to taste it, I observed heaps of vermin between the gills, which made me loathe it altogether, and rather continue to fast, though my strength suffered much.

. . . [T]his good woman conducted us to a side path, whereby we avoided about half a mile of the way we had come. In traversing the forest, we arrived at a shed, supported by four posts, and covered with a roof. Here hung some clothes, and a small reindeer cheese, which last I immediately wished to obtain. But the woman refused, saying she should want it herself for the next holiday. My hunger was such, that I could not lose sight of this cheese, and I was induced to offer her any thing she was pleased to ask for it, telling her I verily believed I should hardly survive another day if I had it not. At length she complied, and the cheese proved afterwards of the most signal service to me. We then took leave of our female companion, and began to measure back our steps. I was thus obliged to return by the course

began to measure back our steps. I was thus obliged to return by the course of the river, having, with the thoughtlessness of youth, undertaken more than it was possible to perform.

1836: USA

From missionary Narcissa Whitman's letters written during her journey in 1836 from New York, across the Rocky Mountains, to Oregon and beyond:

Dear Sister Harriet and Brother Edward:

Friday eve, six o'clock. We have just encamped for the night near the bluffs over against the river. The bottoms are a soft, wet plain, and we were obliged to leave the river yesterday for the bluffs. The face of the country yesterday afternoon and today has been rolling sand bluffs, mostly barren, quite unlike what our eyes have been satiated with for weeks past. No timber nearer than the Platte, and the water tonight is very bad—got from a small ravine. We have usually had good water precious to this.

Our fuel for cooking since we left timber (no timber except on rivers) has been dried buffalo dung; we now find plenty of it and it answers a very good purpose, similar to the kind of coal used in Pennsylvania (I suppose now Harriet will make up a face at this, but if she was here she would be glad to have her supper cooked at any rate in this scarce timber country). The present time in our journey is a very important one. The hunter brought us buffalo meat yesterday for the first time. Buffalo were seen today but none have been taken. We have some for supper tonight. Husband is cooking it—no one of the company professes the art but himself. I expect it will be very good. Stop—I have so much to say to the children that I do not know in what part of my story to begin. I have very little time to write. I will first tell you what our company consists of. We are ten in number; five missionaries, three Indian boys and two young men employed to assist in packing animals.

1849: USA

From the journal of John W. Griffith, traveling on foot from Baja California to San Diego:

[Some of the men were ill from overeating horse flesh. Melville became

[S]OME OF THE MEN WERE ILL FROM OVEREATING HORSE FLESH. MELVILLE BECAME very ill. We had to leave him behind with John R. Clark and Samuel Crane. We had no medicine, but we gave them a little rice and ammunition and promised to return with relief as soon as we could. The strongest and best walkers had to push on. My haversack was full of horse meat. We killed rattlesnakes, one with ten rattles, and made soup. We walked about ten miles.

1890: England

On this day a letter from an undergraduate at Christ Church Oxford, was sent to the steward complaining about the food.

I am sorry to have to make a serious complaint about the butter, with which I am supplied from the Buttery. . . . Yesterday the butter I had for my lunch was simply “rancid,” and had I any strangers lunching with me I should have been ashamed to put such butter before them.

June 4

ETON MESS

Eton College, England

The annual prize-giving ceremony takes place on this day, after which there is a picnic on the playing fields. It is traditional to serve Eton Mess—a dish of strawberries, cream, and crushed meringues—at this picnic. The dish may have been made with bananas in the past, and the meringues were not added until sometime in the 1930s. It is now also a traditional feature of two important English sporting events which take place during strawberry season—Wimbledon and the Henley Regatta.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

1372: London, England

A number of bakers and bakeresses were charged on this day at the guildhall with stealing dough from their customers by a very ingenious method. In

medieval times, and up to the Victorian era, when many ordinary homes did not have ovens, it was usual for individuals to send their made-up dough to the local baker, who, for a fee, would put it in his oven after his own bread was taken out—the massive brick structures retaining their heat for a long time.

The first to appear on this day was John Brid.

John Brid, baker, was attached to make answer as to certain falsehood, malice, and deceit, by him committed, to the nuisance of the common people; as to which, the Mayor, Aldermen, and Sheriffs of the City, were given to understand that the same John, for falsely and maliciously obtaining his own private advantage, did skilfully and artfully cause a certain hole to be made upon a table of his, called a “*moldingborde*” pertaining to his bakehouse, after the manner of a mouse-trap, in which mice are caught; there being a certain wicket warily provided for closing and opening such hole.

And when his neighbours and others, who were wont to bake their bread at his oven, came with their dough or material for making bread, the said John used to put such dough or other material upon the said table, called a “*moldingborde*” as aforesaid, and over the hole before-mentioned, for the purpose of making loaves therefrom, for baking; and such dough or material being so placed upon the table aforesaid, the same John had one of his household, ready provided for the same, sitting in secret beneath such table; which servant of his, so seated beneath the hole, and carefully opening it, piecemeal and bit by bit craftily withdrew some of the dough aforesaid, frequently collecting great quantities from such dough, falsely, wickedly, and maliciously; to the great loss of all his neighbours and persons living near, and of others, who had come to him with such dough to bake, and to the scandal and disgrace of the whole City, and, in especial, of the Mayor and Bailiffs for the safe-keeping of the assizes of the City assigned.

The defendants were all temporarily admitted to Newgate prison until such time as sufficient aldermen could be summoned to make judgment. There was not sufficient evidence to convict John Brid and one Robert de Brokesbourne, and the women, for reasons that are not given, remained in Newgate prison. As for the others,

it was agreed and ordained, that all those of the bakers aforesaid, beneath

whose tables with holes dough had been found, should be put upon the pillory, with a certain quantity of such dough hung from their necks; and that those bakers in whose houses dough was not found beneath the tables aforesaid, should be put upon the pillory, but without dough hung from their necks; and that they should so remain upon the pillory until Vespers at St. Paul's in London should be ended. [A]nd that if any one of the said bakers should in future be found acting with such deceit, falsehood, and malice, he should stand upon the pillory for one whole day, and afterwards abjure the City, so as at no future time to return thereto.

FOOD & THE LAW

1411: France

Charles VI granted cheese makers of the small town of Roquefort-sur-Soulzon the exclusive right to make and mature their special cheese.

1946: USA

The National School Lunch Act became law when the bill was signed by President Truman. The provision of food by schools for students was not a new concept when this act was promulgated, but it seems that a trigger for a federal act was the relatively high number of young men failing their military medicals during the draft for World War II.

The legislation stated:

It is hereby declared the policy of Congress, as a measure of national security, to safeguard the health and well-being of the Nation's children and to encourage the consumption of nutritious agricultural commodities and other food, by assisting the states, through grants-in-aid and other means, in providing an adequate supply of foods and other facilities for the establishment, maintenance, operation, and expansion of non-profit school lunch programs.

THE KING'S BIRTHDAY

1738: Britain

This was the birthday of George III, king of England, and the last lawful king of America. As was the custom in previous eras, the monarch's birthday was celebrated by his family and citizens across the Empire throughout his reign.

1781: India

An officer of Baillie's Detachment wrote, "In consequence and honour of His Majesty's birthday we had for dinner fowl, cutlets, and a flower [flour] pudding, and drank his health in a chatty of sherbet."

A *chatty* is a round earthen pot.

1788: Australia

Governor Phillip of the new colony had a French cook by the name of Bernard de Maliez, and the king's birthday afforded him the "opportunity for displaying his ingenuity."

According to Surgeon Wogan, dinner with Governor Phillip consisted of "mutton, pork, ducks, fowls, fish, kangaroo, salads, pies and preserved fruits, with port, Lisbon, Madeira, Tenerife, and porter."

The celebrations further reduced the already depleted stock, and with other disasters such as the loss by death or wandering of stock meant that the colony had a hard time over the next few years.

1795: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde:

[D]rove over to Norwich, it being the Kings Birth Day. . . . And those Soldiers lately returned from the Continent, marched to Coe'slate Quanttrille Garden, where a Subscription Dinner was provided for them, of rost Beef & boiled Beef &c. Pies, and plenty of rost Legs of Mutton.

1819: Bexhill, England

King George was eighty-one years old, and a celebration was held in the town of Bexhill, Sussex, which was famous for the longevity of its citizens. The town

BEXHILL, Sussex, which was famous for the longevity of its citizens. The town population at the time was eight hundred. Twenty-five men, with an average age of eighty-one years, sat down to dinner and were served by fifteen men with an average age of seventy-one years, the town bells being rung by six men with an average age of sixty-one.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1895: USA

African American inventor Joseph Lee, of Auburndale, Massachusetts, was granted Patent No. 540,553 for a “Bread Crumbing Machine” intended “for use in hotels or restaurants, where a large quantity of bread crumbs are used in cooking.” His method would save waste by using the scraps of bread that come from the table, but could also be used for fresh bread, which tends to “roll” rather than form crumbs.

FOOD FIRSTS

1937: Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA

The first shopping trolleys were put into use on this day at the Piggly-Wiggly supermarket in Oklahoma City. They were the brainchild of the supermarket owner, Sylvan Goldman. Mr Goldman said he got the idea when he noticed that customers had a tendency to stop shopping when the baskets became too full or too heavy. He based the design on a wooden folding chair, making a metal frame prototype, putting a basket on the “seat,” another below the seat, and added wheels to the legs. The frames could be folded and the baskets stacked separately. Regular shoppers were apparently reluctant to use the new-fangled invention, so Goldman hired fake shoppers to wheel the carts around the stores so that the regulars could see them in action.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1666: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys: “[A]nd I home, drinking two bottles of Cocke ale in the streets.”

Cock-ale was a favorite restorative in the time of Samuel Pepys. It was supposedly given to fighting cocks, to make them stronger and more aggressive, and this supposed therapeutic effect was assumed to also benefit humans. Pepys enjoyed it regularly. Here is a recipe for it from *The Closet of the Eminently Learned Sir Kenelm Digby Opened*, (1669):

To [M]ake Cock-Ale

Take eight gallons of Ale, take a Cock and boil him well; then take four pounds of Raisins of the Sun well stoned, two or three Nutmegs, three or four flakes of Mace, half a pound of Dates; beat these all in a Mortar, and put to them two quarts of the best Sack: and when the Ale hath done working, put these in, and stop it close six or seven days, and then bottle it, and a month after you may drink it.

1836: USA

From missionary Narcissa Whitman's journal of her journey in 1836 from New York, across the Rocky Mountains, to Oregon and beyond. In her entry of this day she describes housekeeping on the prairie:

Good morning, H. and E. I wrote last night till supper; after that it was dark I could not see. I told you how many bipeds there was in our company last night; now for the quadrupeds: Fourteen horses, six mules and fifteen head of cattle. We milk four cows. We started with seventeen, but we have killed one calf, and the Fur Company, being out of provision, have taken one of our cows for beef. It is usually pinching times with the Company before they reach the buffalo. We have had plenty because we made ample provision at Liberty. We purchased a barrel of flour and baked enough to last us, with killing a calf or two, until we reached the buffalo.

Since we have been in the prairie we have done all our cooking. When we left Liberty we expected to take bread to last us part of the way, but could not get enough to carry us any distance. We found it awkward work to bake out of doors at first, but we have become so accustomed to it now we do it very easily.

Tell mother I am a very good housekeeper on the prairie. I wish she could just take a peep at us while we are sitting at our meals. Our table is the ground, our table cloth is an India rubber cloth used when it rains as a

ground, our table-cloth is an india-rubber cloth used when it rains as a cloak; our dishes are made of tin-basins for teacups, iron spoons and plates, each of us, and several pans for milk and to put our meat in when we wish to set it on the table. Each one carries his own knife in his scabbard, and it is always ready to use. When the table things are spread, after making our own forks or sticks and helping ourselves to chairs, we gather around the table. Husband always provides my seat, and in a way that you would laugh to see. It is the fashion of all this country to imitate the Turks. Messrs. Dunbar and Allis have supped with us, and they do the same. We take a blanket and lay down by the table, and those whose joints will let them follow the fashion; others take out some of the baggage (I suppose you know that there is no stones in this country not a stone have I seen of any size on the prairie). For my part I fix myself as gracefully as I can, sometimes on a blanket, sometimes on a box, just as it is convenient. Let me assure you of this, we relish our food none the less for sitting on the ground while eating. We have tea and a plenty of milk, which is a luxury in this country. [O]ur milk has assisted us very much in making our bread since we have been journeying. While the Fur Company has felt the want of food, our milk has been of great service to us; but it was considerable work for us to supply ten persons with bread three times a day. We are done using it now. What little flour we have left we shall preserve for thickening our broth, which is excellent. I never saw any thing like buffalo meat to satisfy hunger. We do not want any thing else with it. I have eaten three meals of it and it relishes well. Supper and breakfast we eat in our tent. We do not pitch it at noon. Have worship immediately after supper and breakfast.

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

Here, last night, I met a family of natives who had just commenced their supper; but, seeing us, they ran away and left their things, without even making an attempt to frighten us. Upon examining their camp, I found their koolimans, (vessels to keep water) full of bee bread, of which I partook, leaving for payment some spare nose rings of our bullocks. In their dillies I found the fleshy roots of a bean, which grows in a sandy soil, and has solitary yellow blossoms; the tuber of a vine, which has palmate leaves; a bitter potato, probably belonging to a water plant. Their koolimans were

utter potato, probably belonging to a water-plant. . . . Their koomians were very large, almost like small boats, and were made of the inner layer of the bark of the stringy-bark tree. There was no animal food in the camp.

1849: USA

From the journal of John W. Griffith, traveling on foot from Baja California to San Diego:

Arose before daybreak. Pushed on. Ate prickly pears. Crossed a high mountain. Climbed down a ravine, found water, wild plums and nuts. As we go north the country looks better. But this day has been my worst day of travel. I am so lame I can hardly move, but I persevere. I could not eat my horse flesh so I gave all of it away. I eat only the prickly pear. We carry all the water we can, not knowing when we shall find water again.

June 5

HMY *BRITANNIA*

1997: Japan

The Royal Yacht *Britannia* was in Kobe. The menu for the last meal before she was decommissioned was as follows:

Fillet of Salmon Gallieni

Suprême of Chicken

Assorted Salads

Hot New Potatoes

Profiteroles with Butterscotch Sauce

ANNIVERSARIES

1604: England

Thomas Muffet, physician, entomologist, and nutritionist, died on this day. As well as books on insects and spiders, he wrote a book called *Healths Improvement* (1595), although it was not published until years after his death. In addition to advising about the importance of good food in maintaining health, he suggested various dietary modifications to suit various temperaments. He particularly stressed the importance of good bread: “In the Lord’s Prayer we ask for all bodily nourishment in the name of bread may be just called the Meat of Meats . . . bread is never out of season, disagreeing with no sickness, age or complexion, therefore truly called the companion to life.”

Sourdough bread he felt was especially beneficial: “Bread being thus made strengthens the stomach and carries truly with it, the staff of nourishment.”

Muffet also believed that sweet potatoes were nourishing, but had an aphrodisiac effect: “[Sweet potatoes] nourish mightily . . . engendering much flesh, blood, and seed, but withal encreasing wind and lust.”

FOOD & WAR

1898: USA, Spanish-American War

From the journal of Joseph Beiler (1870–1925) of the 1st Ohio Volunteer Cavalry. His troop did not, in the end, leave the United States. At this time he was in Camp Thomas, Georgia. “Today we had a very find dinner we had a roast beef with brown gravy beef tea or broth rice pudding with leamon flavor smashed potatoes light bread & coffee for supper we had a cold lanch we got done early.”

1918: Britain, World War I

The *Scotsman* newspaper reported on a wartime dinner at Buckingham Palace:

The King and Queen gave a small dinner party at Buckingham Palace last evening. During wartime no entertainment of guests on a large scale is attempted, but Their Majesties are keeping in touch with leading members of various branches of society, and last night’s dinner party was the second of a series designed to that end. The King and Queen set and maintain an example of rationing, and the dinner last night was practically meales, and the menu strictly moderate.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1841: Australia

From the journal of Edward John Eyre (1815–1901) on an expedition into the inland of Central Australia. He has been rescued from near starvation by a whaling ship.

From this time until the fourteenth of June I remained on board the *Mississippi*, enjoying the hospitality of Captain Rossiter. . . . The life led by the whalers, as far as I was able to judge, from the short time I was with them, seemed to be one of regularity, but of considerable hardship. . . . They were, however, well fed, being apparently even better dieted than the generality of merchant-ships; the bread was of a better quality, and the allowance of butter, cheese, beans, and other little luxuries much more liberal.

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia. One of his party is constantly on the look-out for coffee substitutes.

As the waterholes became larger, waterfowl became more plentiful; and Brown succeeded in shooting several wood-ducks and a *Malacorhynchus membranaceus*. The bean of the Mackenzie was very abundant in the sandy bed of the river; we roasted and ate some of its fruit; it was, however, too heavy, and produced indigestion: Mr. Phillips pounded them, and they made an excellent substitute for coffee, which I preferred to our tea, which, at that time, was not very remarkable for its strength.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1661: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys: "And there we stayed (*in the garden*) talking

and singing and drinking of great draughts of Claret, and eating botargo [salted fish roe], and bread and butter till 12 at night, it being moonshine.”

1849: USA

From the journal of John W. Griffith, traveling on foot from Baja California to San Diego:

The Mexicans who gave my friends the corn have joined our party. We crossed another mountain, struck into a ravine, then came out into a valley. We were tired, sore-footed, hardly able to move along. We stopped at the hut of an Indian. He made us some mush that tasted like earth. We devoured it, felt rested and refreshed. Rosario seemed so near and yet so far. About 4 p.m. we arrived. Some of our party, who reached the village earlier, had a dinner ready of beans and corn bread. It was the best dinner I ever ate. It was my first meal in twenty days. That night we killed a beef, ate some of the meat for supper, and slept under fig and apple trees near the bank of a river.

June 6

INSECTS AS FOOD

1853: London, England

A paper entitled *On the Insects Used for Food by the Indians of the Amazon* was read before the Entomological Society of London, and subsequently printed in the Society's *Transactions* series in April 1854. The author mentions five insects, including the head louse, and one type of worm.

Annulose animals have found little favour as articles of food, and those which have come into use in one country are often despised in another. We ourselves consume quantities of Crustacea, but would be loth to eat the locusts of the East or the fat butterflies of Australia; while the palm worms of the West Indies, though highly esteemed there, have not yet been introduced at the tables of our epicures.

The Indians of the Amazon are less fastidious in their tastes, for while

turtles, alligators, lizards, snakes and frogs are all common articles of food, some species of insects and other Annulosa furnish them with their greatest luxuries.

Six different orders—Hymenoptera, Neuroptera, Homoptera, Coleoptera, Aptera and Annelida—each supply one species to add to the varieties of the Indian's bill of fare.

The first is a great-headed red ant, the *Ecodoma cephalotes* of Latreille. . . . The part eaten is the abdomen, which is very rich and fatty from the mass of undeveloped eggs. They are eaten alive; the insect being held by the head as we hold a strawberry by its stalk, and the abdomen being bitten off, the body, wings and legs are thrown down on the floor, where they continue to crawl along. . . . When great quantities are caught, they are slightly roasted or smoked, with a little salt sprinkled among them, and are then generally much liked by Europeans.

The next insect in the list is the *Termes flavicolle*, Perty; a large white ant common in the Upper Amazon. In this case it is not the winged female that is eaten, but the great-headed, hard-biting worker, . . . These insects are also eaten alive or roasted; but in this case it is not the abdomen but the enormous head and thorax which is devoured, as those parts contain a considerable mass of muscular matter. These insects have generally a bitter taste and are not much esteemed, except by the Indians themselves.

The edible Homopterous insect is the *Umbonia spinosa*, the sharp spine on their thorax . . . seems to render them very ill adapted for food, but when they first appear the whole body is soft and flaccid, and they are then collected and roasted in a flat earthen pan. They are not, however, so much esteemed as the other insects I have mentioned.

The next edible insect I shall allude to is the larva of a beetle, but of what species or genus I am unable to say, . . . though it is probably a *Calandra*, as it is found in the stem of a palm tree. It is much swollen, and attenuated at each end; and is a rich fatty mass, which is eaten slightly roasted or fried. It is not by any means so common in the Amazon as the other edible insects; and in fact, I never saw it eaten, or ate it myself but once. It is called "muxeina" by the Indians.

The Apterous insect which is eaten by the South American Indians, more I

presume as a delicacy than as an article of food, is a species of *Pediculus* which inhabits the heads of that variety of mankind [i.e, head louse], and is probably a distinct species from that of our own country. The method of capturing and devouring this insect is exactly the same as that which everyone has seen adopted by the monkeys at the gardens of the Zoological Society. A couple of Indian belles will often devote a spare half-hour to entomological researches in each others glossy tresses, every capture being immediately transferred with much gusto to the mouth of the operator.

The remaining annulose animal I have to mention is a singular species of earth worm. . . . When more are obtained than are wanted for bait they are boiled with fish; and, though they look very disgusting and are intensely bitter, they are a favourite food with most Indians.

FOOD & WAR

1944: France, World War II

The Café Gondrée, in Bénouville, Normandy, was the first dwelling place liberated from the Germans. The 5th parachute brigade of the 6th British Airborne Division was assigned the task of seizing and holding the bridges on the river Orne. This was swiftly done by 1 a.m. on the 6th, and the small café near the bridge, and the couple who owned it, were the first liberated.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1916: USA

James Lewis Kraft was granted Patent No. 1,186,524 for a “Process of Sterilizing Cheese and an Improved Product Produced by Such Process.” His patent application stated:

This invention relates to an improved process of sterilising cheese to render it permanently keeping, and to the product thereby produced.

The chief object of the invention is to convert cheese of the Cheddar genus into such condition that it may be kept indefinitely without spoiling, in conditions that would ordinarily cause it to spoil, and to accomplish this result without substantially impairing the taste of the cheese.

Kraft noted the irreversible changes which occur when cheese is heated:

It is a well-known fact that cheese of the Cheddar genus cannot be heated to a temperature much above its melting point without disintegrating and permanently losing its true cheesy character. That is to say, the melted cheese becomes stringy and the casein and fats separate and cannot be returned to their original combined true cheese form and homogenous condition.

Kraft's method was essentially that of homogenization, which enabled the cheese to withstand the higher temperatures of sterilization. He was subsequently granted further patents for modifications of this method.

FIRST FOOD COLUMNIST

1866: France

The Baron Brissé was one of the first, if not *the* first newspaper food writer. In his column in *La Liberté* on this day, he seemed to suggest that Baked Alaska was introduced into France by the chef of a visiting Chinese delegation at the Grand Hotel in Paris.

During the stay of the Chinese delegation in Paris, the chefs of the Celestial Empire exchanged courtesies and recipes with the chefs at the Grand Hotel. The French dessert chef was delighted at this opportunity: his Chinese colleague taught him the art of cooking vanilla and ginger ices in the oven. This is how the delicate operation was performed: very firm ice cream is enveloped in an extremely light pastry crust and baked in the oven. The crust insulated the interior and is cooked before the ice cream can melt. Gourmand can then enjoy the twofold pleasure of biting into a crisp crust and at the same time referencing the palate with the flavoured ice cream.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1811: England

Jane Austen wrote to her sister Cassandra on this day, and expressed her pleasure at receiving their new Wedgwood dinnerware.

pleasure at receiving them new wedgwood dinnerware.

On Monday I had the pleasure of receiving, unpacking and approving our Wedgwood ware. It all came very safely and upon the whole is a good match, tho' I think they might have allowed us rather larger leaves, especially in such a year of fine foliage as this. . . .

There was no bill with the goods but that shall not screen them from being paid. I mean to ask Martha [Lloyd, a great friend of the Austens, later the wife of Jane's brother Francis] to settle the account. It will be quite in her way for she is now just sending my mother a breakfast set from the same place. I hope it will come by the Waggon tomorrow; it is certainly what we want, and I long to know what it is like.

1844: USA

From the American journals of Nathaniel Hawthorne:

Mr. F— arrived yesterday, and appeared to be in most excellent health, and as happy as the sunshine. About the first thing he did was to wash the dishes; and he is really indefatigable in the kitchen, so that I am quite a gentleman of leisure. Previous to his arrival, I had kindled no fire for four entire days, and had lived all that time on the corned beef, except one day, when Ellery and I went down the river on a fishing excursion. Yesterday, we boiled some lamb, which we shall have cold for dinner to-day. This morning, Mr. F— fried a sumptuous dish of eels for breakfast. Mrs. P.— continues to be the instrument of Providence, and yesterday sent us a very nice plum-pudding.

1849: USA

From the journal of John W. Griffith, traveling on foot from Baja California to San Diego:

Breakfasted on meat and *tortillas*. Barbecued ribs for dinner. Had some more of that good corn cake. The men are friendly; the women are good-looking. Some of our party have started on for San Diego. We have sent horses to aid Melville and the others with him. It seems as if we can never get enough to eat. We are enjoying our rest, and our feet are getting well.

June 7

THE DUNMOW FLITCH

1701: Great Dunmow, Essex, England

The Dunmow Flitch Trials are an ancient custom in the village of Great Dunmow in Essex. Originally, any married man who could swear that he had not, in the course of a year and a day, regretted his marriage and wished himself single again, could apply to Dunmow Priory for an award of a flitch (side) of bacon. If the Prior was convinced, then the flitch was awarded. After the Reformation, the Lord of the Manor took over the trial and awarding of the bacon, and by 1701, the wife was also “on trial.”

The trials are believed to have had their origin in the early twelfth century, and were mentioned in Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* (c. 1387) in such a manner as to suggest that readers would have been familiar with the custom.

The names of successful applicants were not recorded until 1445, when the flitch went to a Richard Wright. To judge by the paucity of winners over the centuries, the goal of marital harmony for the period of one year and one day was almost impossible to achieve, or to prove.

The trials were reinstated in 1855, after a lapse of some decades, and are now held every leap year, as a cultural and tourist event.

In 1701, on June 7, the flitch was awarded to Mr. and Mrs. Liddall of Harrowgate, after which a celebratory dinner was held at the Green Dragon.

The bill of fare of the dinner was as follows:

Beans and Bacon

Cabbage, colliflower

Three doz chickens.

Two shoulders mutton, cowcubmers.

Two turbot

Two turkeys.

Rump beef, &c., &c.

Goose and plum pudding.

Quarter lamb, salad.

Tarts, jellies, strawberries, cream.

Cherries, syllabubs, and blommange.

Leg lamb, spinnage.

Crawfish, pickled salmon.

Fry'd tripe, calves' heads

Gravy and pease soop.

Two piggs

Breast veal, ragood.

Ice cream, pine apple.

Surloin beaf.

Pigeons, green peas.

Lobsters, crabs.

Twelve red herrings, twenty-two dobils.

IN THE NEWS

1749: England

The *Gentleman's Magazine* for June 1749 reported a fine haul of salmon from the River Thames:

Three of the greatest herrings of England were caught in the Thames below

Two of the greatest draughts of salmon were caught in the names, below Richmond, that have been known some years; one net having thirty-five large salmon in it, and another twenty-one, which lowered the price of fresh salmon at Billingsgate from “1s to 6d per lb.”

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1577: Orkney Islands

From Dionise Settles’s account of the second voyage undertaken by Martin Frobisher to the New World to look for the Northwest Passage. They sailed north from Blackwall on 27 May 1577.

[T]he 7th of June we arrived at the islands called Orchades, or vulgarly Orkney, being in number thirty, subject and adjacent to Scotland, where we made provision of fresh water, in the doing whereof our general licensed the gentlemen and soldiers, for their recreation, to go on shore. . . . They are destitute of wood, their fire is turf and cow sharded. They have corn, bigge, and oats, with which they pay their king’s rent to the maintenance of his house. They take great quantity of fish, which they dry in the wind and sun; they dress their meat very filthily, and eat it without salt.

Bigge is somewhat of a mystery. The *Oxford English Dictionary* suggests, but not with any confidence, that perhaps it means “hare,” although the context above suggests a staple cereal.

1630: America

From the journal of John Winthrop, aboard the *Arbella* en route to start a new colony in America:

The wind south. About four in the morning we sounded and had ground at thirty fathom, and was somewhat calm; so we put our ship a-stays, and took, in less than two hours, with a few hooks, sixty-seven codfish, most of them very great fish, some a yard and a half long, and a yard in compass. This came very seasonably, for our salt fish was now spent, and we were taking care for victuals this day (being a fish day). . . . We sounded at eight, and had fifty fathom, and, being calm, we heaved out our hooks again, and took twenty-six cods; so we all feasted with fish this day.

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

We passed a camp of natives, who were very much alarmed at the report of a gun, which Mr. Gilbert happened to fire when very near them; this he did in his anxiety to procure a pair of *Geophaps plumifera*, for his collection. These pretty little pigeons had been first observed by Brown in the course of our yesterday's stage, who shot two of them, but they were too much mutilated to make good specimens. We frequently saw them afterwards, but never more than two, four, or six together, running with great rapidity and with elevated crest over the ground, and preferring the shady rocks along the sandy bed of the river. I tried several methods to render the potatoes, which we had found in the camps of the natives, eatable; but neither roasting nor boiling destroyed their sickening bitterness. At last, I pounded and washed them, and procured their starch, which was entirely tasteless, but thickened rapidly in hot water, like arrow-root; and was very agreeable to eat, wanting only the addition of sugar to make it delicious; at least so we fancied.

The "potatoes" were certainly not the vegetable we now call potatoes. He had earlier described them as "the tuber of a vine, which has palmate leaves; a bitter potato, probably belonging to a water-plant."

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1789: Britain

From the diaries of John Byng, 5th Viscount Torrington, written during his horseback tours of England and Wales: "*Grantham, June 7th* . . . She [the landlady] almost instantly returned . . . placing before us a Round of Beef boil'd, a Leg of Mutton roasted, with Greens, a Rice Pudding, and a Gooseberry-Pie."

1831: USA

Gustave de Beaumont, a traveling companion to Alexis de Tocqueville, wrote to his mother from the United States.

The clear profit I've found in these calls in society has been to speak much English. We are making progress. Nevertheless, it happens to us every day to confuse things strangely. We are never entirely certain of what we are told. . . . We sometimes mistake the day on which we are invited to tea, and very recently a great landholder of the neighborhood, a member of the Livingston family, had made great preparations to receive us. He had prepared a splendid dinner and gathered a number of people in our honor. His dinner was for three o'clock. He waited till five, and we did not come. Alas! We at the moment quietly at home, completely ignorant that they were waiting for us.

. . . Desolated to have been impolite to Mr Livingston in spite of ourselves, we wanted to make a courtesy call on him. His country house is situated between SingSing and New York. It was therefore on our road, on returning, to pass by his house. We knew that he dined at two o'clock. Consequently we arrived at his house at three. But by misfortune we had been mistaken and we arrived at the moment of family dinner. There were then at table with everybody, but resolved not to eat, because the visit would have lost its character of civility.

Judge of our position. We were dying of hunger and the dishes passed under our noses. They pressed us to eat some excellent ices prepared in haste for us. We had to accept; we devoured them. But at four o'clock the steamboat was to pass and we were to go on board. It was for us the only method of getting away. Four o'clock rings; no steamboat. Someone says it has passed, so that we were in mortal embarrassment. For if we stayed at the house, how dine after having said that we had already dined? We saw ourselves in the plight of having eaten an ice for a meal. We couldn't help laughing at the comical in our situation. Happily the steamboat which was late came to deliver us.

June 8

A MENU FOR JUNE 8

1784: France

Marie-Antoine (Antonin) Carême, the man styled in his own lifetime as “The King of Cooks and the Cook of Kings” was born on this day (died 1822). His

KING OF COOKS and THE COOK OF KINGS was born on this day (died 1855). His life did not have an auspicious beginning. He was abandoned to fend for himself, at the age of about ten or eleven, by poor parents with many more mouths to feed, in the midst of French Revolutionary Paris. He found a job as a kitchen hand in a very lowly Parisian eating house. Some years later he became an apprentice to a pastry cook, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Carême became a legend in his own lifetime. He was at various times chef to Talleyrand, Tsar Alexander I, and George, Prince of Wales, the future King George IV of England, and he orchestrated some of the most famous banquets of the time. He is considered the founder of classical, and extraordinarily elaborate, French *grand cuisine*. One of his contributions to cookery was the codification of the four primary families of French sauces, giving chefs a common language for their art. He was also a prolific writer, and his books, especially his five-volume *L'Art de la Cuisine Française*, are still essential reading for anyone wanting to understand classic French cookery.

In another of his books, the *Maitre d'Hotel Français* published in 1822, Carême gave a menu for every day of the year. The menus were for various types of meals (*grand diner, grand souper, grand buffet*) and for different numbers of guests, and were clearly for illustrative purposes. There is no mention of his own birthday in the book, but here is his menu for June 8.

8 JUIN, Samedi. Menu de 10 à 12 couverts

Deux potages.

Le potage de purée de pois aux petits croûtons,

Le sagou au consommé de volaille.

Deux relevés de poissons.

Les petites truites au bleu,

La matelote au vin de Bordeaux.

Deux grosses pièces.

La noix de veau en bédeau, aux oignons glacés;

La belle poularde à l'ivoire, aspic chaud.

Quatre entrées.

L'émincé de filet de bœuf à la Clermont,

Les quenelles de volaille au suprême,

Les filets de lapereaux à l'Allemande,

Le fritot de poulets à la Saint-Florentin.

Deux plats de rôts.

Les vanneaux bardés,

Les dindonneaux au cresson.

Deux relevés de plats de rôts.

Le flan à la Milanaise,

Le gâteau de cerises.

Quatre entremets.

Les laitues à l'essence,

Les artichauts frits à la Provençale,

La gelée de fraise moulée,

Les darioles soufflées au citron.

FOOD & WAR

1862: USA, Civil War

Private Frederick Osborne, stationed in North Carolina, wrote a letter home to

his family in Massachusetts: “Aunt Jane has been making ‘lection cake I suppose, or is the time for it past?”

Election cake is, as its name suggests, made at the time of local elections—but not originally political elections. The cake is a New England specialty, and dates back to the time when the British summoned eligible men from the region to the nearest town for military practice. The women of the town did a huge amount of baking to prepare for the influx of a large number of hungry men, and the cakes—also known as training cakes or muster cakes—were one of their offerings. The cakes were made from yeast-leavened bread dough suitably sweetened and enriched with fruit, it being well before baking powders were developed.

The first American cookbook, *American Cookery* by Amelia Simmons, published in 1796, contained a recipe for an election cake of suitably massive proportions.

Election Cake

Thirty quarts flour, 10 pound butter, 14 pound sugar, 12 pound raisins, 3 doz eggs, one pint wine, one quart brandy, 4 ounces cinnamon, 4 ounces fine colander seed, 3 ounces ground alspice; wet the flour with milk to the consistence of bread over night, adding one quart yeast; the next morning work the butter and sugar together for half an hour, which will rended the cake much lighter and whiter; when it has rise light work in every other ingredient except the plumbs, which work in when going into the oven.

1864: USA, Civil War

From the diary of Frances W. Wallace, wife of Confederate officer Philip Hugh Wallace, kept during a journey to and from her home in Kentucky to visit her husband stationed in Alabama:

Phil came home much to our surprise. We walked home with Mrs Humphries, quite late. Mrs Boykin had us to spend the evening with her. Met Dr and Mrs Johnson, Mr and Mrs Battle. The table looked beautiful. We had pound cake, teacakes, chicken salad, custard, peaches and cream, broiled chicken, biscuit, cakes and wafers, and after tea went to Mrs Battle’s to practice for the concert. Spent a very pleasant evening.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1806: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day William Clark wrote:

[O]ne of those Indians informed us that we could not cross the mountains until the full of the next moon; or about the 1st of July. [I]f we attempted it Sooner our horses would be three days without eating, on the top of the Mountns. [T]his information is disagreeable to us, in as much as it admits of some doubt, as to the time most proper for us to Set out.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1789: Britain

From the diaries of John Byng, 5th Viscount Torrington, written during his horseback tours of England and Wales: “*Southwell, June 8th 1789*. . . . put up at the Saracens-Head Inn . . . where to my great contentment, I was instantly served . . . with Cold Beef, Cold Veal and Gooseberry Tart.”

1890: Greece

Ada Leslie, a Victorian governess and companion to Royalty wrote to her cousin on this day.

Tatoi, Greece, My dearest Pollie

In Athens we ate our meals at much the same hours as fashionable people do in England, but here a difference is made more suitable to the warmer days. We have coffee, toast & eggs in our rooms early in the morning. At midday a light luncheon, “it keeps our stomachs in good temper” as Princess Sophie expresses it. Then everybody disappears, not a servant of any description is to be seen until about 3 o’clock, when one by one they slowly appear on the scenes again. At 3.30 we dine. The King & Royal family have dinner served in the garden always, Tea follows.

June 9

SAINT COLUMBA'S DAY

Columba (Columcille, Columkille) is a favorite saint of the Scots and the Irish. It is considered to be the luckiest day of the year in Highland Scotland, especially if it falls on a Thursday.

In Scotland, a silver coin (for luck) used to be hidden on this day in the oaten cakes (bannocks) which were the staple daily food.

In Ireland, Columba is associated with a soup called *Brotchan Folchep* or *Brotchan Roy* (which means "fit for a king"). The so-called traditional version is made from oatmeal and leeks, but soup is an infinitely flexible dish, and in very poor times, in early springtime the greens used were often nettles collected in the wild. The story is told of Columba seeing a poor woman gathering nettles for pottage, which was to be her only food until her cow calved and she could have milk and butter. Lent was about to begin, so the saint instructed the lay brother who assisted him to feed him nothing but nettle broth, with no butter or dripping or any other enriching ingredient. The assistant queried his request, to which Columba repeated that nothing else was to be added "except what comes out of the pot-stick." After a few weeks, Columba was looking gaunt, but then suddenly, he began to gain weight and look well again. Columba makes an enquiry of his cook, and found that the young monk had made a hole through the pot stick down which he was pouring milk and oatmeal. He had remained true to his master's order, yet avoided the sin of disobedience.

FOOD & THE LAW

1866: Paris

An imperial decree on this day authorized the sale of horseflesh in the public markets. Meat was expensive at this time, and in an attempt to promote horsemeat as an alternative to beef, especially for the poor, a series of Horsemeat Banquets had been held in Paris and London around this time (see **February 6**).

In October, a correspondent for the *London Times* reported:

There are at present 17 shops in Paris where the "viande de cheval" is sold

there are at present 17 shops in Paris where the viande de cheval is sold, and I have been informed by the master of the principal establishment, 3, Place d'Italie, that he daily supplies several restaurants, and had some so regularly since the Imperial decree of June 9, 1886, authorized the sale of horseflesh in the public markets, but that these restaurants do not venture to sell the meat under its real name.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1953: USA

John H. Kraft, of Chicago, Illinois, for Kraft Foods Company, was granted Patent No. 2,641,545 for the "Manufacture of Soft Surface Cured Cheese."

This invention relates in general to the manufacture of soft, surface-cured, mold ripened cheeses, such as for example, Camembert, Brie, and the like and in particular, to the provision of a soft, surface cured cheese whose mold pad may be readily removed.

FOOD & THE MILITARY

1777: America

George Washington issued a General Order in relation to the health benefits of the "wild greens" available in the vicinity of camps.

Headquarters, Middle-Brook

As there is a plenty of common and French sorrel; lamb's quarters, and water cresses, growing about camp; and as these vegetables are very conducive to health, and tend to prevent the scurvy and all putrid disorders[.]. . . the General recommends to the soldiers the constant use of them, as they make an agreeable salad, and have the most salutary effect. The regimental officer of the day [is] to send to gather them every morning, and have them distributed among the men.

AN AFTER-THEATRE SUPPER

1937: London, England

The Wine and Food Society attended an after-theatre supper on this night, as was reported the following day in the *Times*.

In its quest for variety, the Wine and Food Society chose for the forty-fifth meeting last night Boulestin's Restaurant, Covent Garden, where an after-theater supper had been prepared. Mr. X. Marcel Boulestin was in the chair. It was explained that due regard had been paid to the selection of proper fare because supper was responsible to a large extent for peaceful slumbers or a restless night.

There was a selection of dainty *canapés* and a glass of chilled Amontillado "which acted as a bugle-call to the appetite." No soup was served, but instead a *Pipérade*, a Basque dish which was new to most; then a choice of *Jambon de Meursault*, *Terrine Périgourdine* or *Gigot en Daube*, and *Salade de Laitue aux Pointes d'Asperges*. Wild strawberries concluded the meal. Another small party will be entertained tonight.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769: Tahiti

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks:

"*Otahite*": Bread fruit has for some time been scarce with us; about 10 days ago the trees were thinnd all at once from their being a great shew of fruit; every one was employd in making *Mahie* for about a week. Where the breadfruit we now have comes from we cannot tell, but we have more than the woods in our neighbourhood can supply us with. Probably our consumption has thinnd the trees in this neighbourhood, as the Dolphins who came here about this time saw great plenty all the time they stayd; if this is the case what we now get may be brought from some neig[h]bouring place where the trees are not yet exhausted.

Mahie is made by fermenting breadfruit, as a way of preserving it for use when the fresh fruit is not available.

Mahie

This mahie is a preparation of the ripe bread fruit, for which it is substituted during the season, just before gathering a fresh crop. It is made thus: The fruit is gathered just before it is perfectly ripe, and being laid in heaps, is closely covered with leaves; in this state it undergoes a fermentation, and becomes disagreeably sweet. The core is then taken out entire, by gently pulling the stalk, and the fruit is thrown into a hole which is dug for that purpose, generally in the houses, and neatly lined in the bottom and sides with grass; the whole is then covered with leaves, and heavy stones laid upon them. In this state it undergoes a second fermentation, and becomes sour; after which it undergoes no change for many months. It is taken out of the hole as it is wanted for use, and being made into balls, it is wrapped up in leaves, and roasted or baked. After it is baked, it will keep five or six weeks. It is eaten both cold and hot, and the natives seldom make a meal without it. To Europeans, however, the taste is said to be as disagreeable as that of a pickled olive generally is the first time it is eaten.

—*The Complete Cook*, (1846) by J.M. Sanderson

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

We gathered some blossoms of the drooping tea-tree, which were full of honey, and, when soaked, imparted a very agreeable sweetness to the water. We frequently observed great quantities of washed blossoms of this tree in the deserted camps of the natives; showing that they were as fond of the honey in the blossoms of the tea-tree, as the natives of the east coast are of that of the several species of Banksia.

1849: USA

From the journal of Willian Z. Walker, on the Mormon migration across the plains to Utah:

June 9th, Started at 5 o'clk without our breakfast, there being no wood for fuel and the buffalo chips being to damp to cook with. We traveled till dark and encamped near a fine Spring of cool water of which we drank very

plentifully. We luxuriated on a fine dish of chocolate at supper.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1665: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

[A]nd so home, where by and by comes Mr. Honiwood and Mrs. Wilde, and Roger Pepys and, after long time spent, Mrs. Turner, The. and Joyce. We had a very good venison pasty, this being instead of my stone-feast the last March, and very merry we were, and the more I know the more I like Mr. Honiwood's conversation. So after a good supper they parted, walking to the 'Change for a coach, and I with them to see them there. So home and to bed, glad it was over.

June 10

THE SKINNER'S FEAST

1560: London, England

The election day feast of the Worshipful Company of Skinners was described by Henry Machin in his diary.

The tenth day of June was the master of the Company of Skinners' feast. And there many worshipful men were at dinner, for there was a worshipful dinner. And there was chosen the master of fellowship, Mr. Fletcher, and master warden, Mr. Clarenceux, and three more. And afterward, they were brought home by the livery. And Mr. Clarenceux made a great banquet for the masters and his company: first, spice bread, cherries, strawberries, pippins, and marmalade and sweetmeats of candied fruit, comfits, and sweetmeats, portugals, and divers other dishes, hippocras, Rhenish wine, claret wine, and beer and ale great plenty. And all was welcome.

Portugals are oranges.

Hippocras: See September 16.

A BANQUET AT VERSAILLES

1837: Paris, France

A dinner was held at Versailles on this day to celebrate the reopening of the Royal Opera after the extensive renovation carried out by Louis-Phillipe.

The sum expended under the direction of the architect Nepveu, for the creation of the National Museum of Versailles, exceeded 20 million francs (about \$4 million).

More than 20 million francs (about \$4 million) had been spent on the renovation of the grounds and palace of the former royal palace, turning it into the National Museum of Versailles. The inauguration was attended by Louis Philippe and his queen, officers of the Army, members of the government and prominent fold from society and the professions.

At eight o'clock the royal family and fifteen hundred guests assembled in the brilliantly illuminated Opera House, where they enjoyed a performance of Molière's *The Misanthrope* and listened to extracts from Meyerbeer's opera *Robert le Diable*. The banquet which followed was reported by the *Times* of London.

[T]he dinner at a fête at Versailles . . . Among the dishes served for the massive dinner . . . 4,043 fowls, 300 chickens, 100 pheasants, 60 sheep, and 3,000 lb of salt-water fish. The quantity of wine is stated at 8,000 bottles. The consumption of sugar is estimated at 2,000 lbs. The early vegetables, fruits, and flowers, were brought from a great distance. It is said that the civil list paid more than 6,000f for the *octroi* duty at Versailles for the different objects for the banquet. It would excite astonishment could the bill of fare be dissected article by article.

A SPICE FIRE

1760: Holland

The Dutch had a virtual monopoly on the spice trade in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and they were reputed to burn huge quantities to maintain high prices. A number of early nineteenth-century publications reported a

high prices. A number of early nineteenth century publications reported a particular event that was said to have happened on June 10, 1760.

Monsieur Beaumaré reported that he saw at Amsterdam, near the admiralty, a fire, the fuel whereof was valued at 8,000,000 of livres, and as much more was to be burned the day following. The spectators' feet were bathed in the essential oil of these aromatics, yet no person was suffered to preserve any of it, much less to take any of the spices out of the fire. A poor man, some years before, upon a similar occasion, and at the same place, had taken up some nutmegs which happened to roll out of the burning, and Monsieur Beaumaré was informed the man instantly was seized, condemned, and executed.

AMERICAN COLONIAL HISTORY

1621

The new colonists were given maize and fish by the Indians on this day. The account is taken from *Mourt's Relation*, one of the few primary sources of early American colonial history.

With these presents and message we set forth the tenth June, about nine o'clock in the morning, our guide resolving that night to rest at Nemasket, a town under Massasoit, and conceived by us to be very near, because the inhabitants flocked so thick upon every slight occasion amongst us: but we found it to be some fifteen English miles. On the way we found some ten or twelve men, women, and children, which had pestered us till we were weary of them, perceiving that (as the manner of them all is) where victual is easiest to be got, there they live, especially in the summer: by reason whereof, our bay affording many lobsters, they resort every spring-tide thither; and now returned with us to Nemasket. Thither we came about three o'clock after noon, the inhabitants entertaining us with joy, in the best manner they could, giving us a kind of bread called by them maizium, and the spawn of shads, which then they got in abundance, insomuch as they gave us spoons to eat them. With these they boiled musty acors, but of the shads we ate heartily. After this they desired one of our men to shoot a crow, complaining what damage they sustained in their corn by them, who shooting some fourscore off and killing, they much admired it, as other shots on other occasions.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1853: Britain

An early food preservation patent was granted to Peter Armand le Comte de Fontaine Moreau, for preserving milk, “by forming a vacuum within the substance, by an exhaust pump, by raising the temperature,” or “by using a tube which is filled with milk, and put in communication with a reservoir containing a convenient quantity of that liquid, and covered with a layer of oil.”

FOOD & WAR

1775: American Revolutionary War

The Third Provincial Congress authorized the following military ration allowances on this day:

1. One pound of bread.
2. Half a pound of beef and half a pound of pork and if pork cannot be had, one pound and a quarter of beef; and one day in seven they shall have one pound and one quarter of salt fish, instead of one day’s allowance of meat.
3. One pint of milk, or, if milk cannot be had, one gill of rice.
4. One quart of good spruce or malt beer.
5. One gill of peas or beans, or other sauce equivalent.
6. Six ounces of good butter per week.
7. One pound of good common soap for six men per week.
8. Half a pint of vinegar per week per man, if it can be had.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1818: Australia

From John Oxley's journal of his expedition in 1818 to explore the Macquarie River region: "Kangaroos, fish, and swans, were the produce of this day's sport, so that we enjoyed all the necessaries, and many of the luxuries of life."

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1824: India

From the journal of Richard Heber, bishop of Calcutta from 1822 to 1826. He describes the mango.

Of the fruits which this season offers, the finest are leeches (*lychees*) and mangoes: the first is really very fine, being a sort of plum, with the flavour of a Frontigniac grape. The second is a noble fruit in point of size, being as large as a man's two fists; its flavour is not unlike an apricot, more or less smeared in turpentine. It would not, I think, be popular in England. . . .

When not quite ripe it makes an excellent tart.

June 11

HOT DOG DIPLOMACY

1939: New York, a Hot Dog for the King

President Roosevelt and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt gave a picnic for King George VI and Queen Elizabeth in Hyde Park (their estate) New York.

Wanting to serve something particularly American, Eleanor decided on hot dogs. The decision caused much controversy, many critics (including the president's mother) fearing that "the dignity of our country will be imperilled by inviting Royalty to a picnic, particularly a hot dog picnic!" Eleanor stuck to her decision, however, and was soundly vindicated as the king enjoyed his "hot dog sandwich" so much he asked for another. The menu was as follows:

Beer and soft drinks.

Hot dogs (if weather permits).

Cold Ham from various States.

Turkey, smoked and plain.

Various salads.

Baked beans and brown bread.

Doughnuts and ginger bread cookies.

Coffee.

The menu for dinner that evening was this:

Fairhaven fish chowder with oysterettes.

Sweetbreads with mushrooms in pastry baskets.

Fresh garden peas and fresh asparagus.

Tongue aspic.

Avocado and grapefruit salad.

Ginger ice cream, cake and strawberries.

Coffee.

BREAKFAST ABOARD THE *LUSITANIA*

1911

The breakfast menu aboard the Cunard Line RMS *Lusitania* for second cabin passengers on this day was as follows:

Apples

Oatmeal Porridge and Fresh Milk

Broiled Codfish Steaks Aberdeen Haddock

Boiled Eggs to Order

-

Broiled Cumberland Ham Fried Eggs

Grilled Beef Steak Saute Potatoes

Rice Cakes, Golden Syrup

-

COLD

Corned Beef

-

Watercress

White & Graham Rolls Soda Scones

Vienna Bread

-

Marmalade Jam

-

Tea Coffee Cocoa

FOOD & WAR

1947: USA, World War II

Sugar rationing ended almost two years after the end of the war.

According to newspaper reports, the sugar purchases over the next three months were almost double the wartime average of 76 pounds per person per year. Before the war, sugar consumption had averaged 112 pounds per person per year.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1793: USA

Robert Heterick (or Haeterick) of Pennsylvania was granted the first American patent (No. 63X) for a cast iron stove. Details of this, and many other early American patents were lost when a fire damaged the Patent Office in 1836. It is not known if the stove was ever manufactured on any scale.

In 1803, Heterick was granted Patent No. 469X for “Improvement called the Columbia fireplace.”

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1806: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day William Clark wrote:

[T]his root (*quawmash*) is palatable but disagrees with us in every shape we have ever used it. the nativs are extreemly fond of this root and present it [to] their visiters as a great treat. [W]hen we first arrived at the Chopunnish last fall at this place our men whe were half Starved made so free a use of this root that it made them all sick for several days after.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1838: USA

Mrs. Sarah Smith, wife of missionary Reverand Asa Bowen Smit (traveling with Narcissa Whitman and her husband), crossed the country in 1838. She wrote about making meat pies along the trail and how she improvised to make up for the lack of a rolling pin and breadboard. The group Sarah was traveling with

brought a reflector oven, which made baking much easier.

Have just taken our supper of buffalo. We love it very much when it is cooked good as it was tonight. Mr. Gray and Mr. Smith are cooks. They sometimes boil & fry, sometimes chop it and make it appear like sausage. After it is fried, make a milk gravy & it is very fine. Such was our supper tonight. We eat no bread at all, are saving the flour, fearing we shall need it when on the sandy plain there is no game.

June 12

MME. POULARD'S OMELET

1931: France

Mme. Poulard was famous for the omelettes she made at her restaurant on Mont St. Michel. The restaurant was sold in 1906, and Mère Poularde died in 1931. The secret of her legendary omelettes was discussed and disputed for decades. *The Scotsman* newspaper of this date claimed to have the authentic recipe.

Mme. Poulard's Omelette

Since the death of *Mme.* (Mère) Poulard, the restaurant keeper of Mont St Michel, so well known to thousands of British tourists, various attempts have been made to discover the secret of the omelette for which she was renowned.

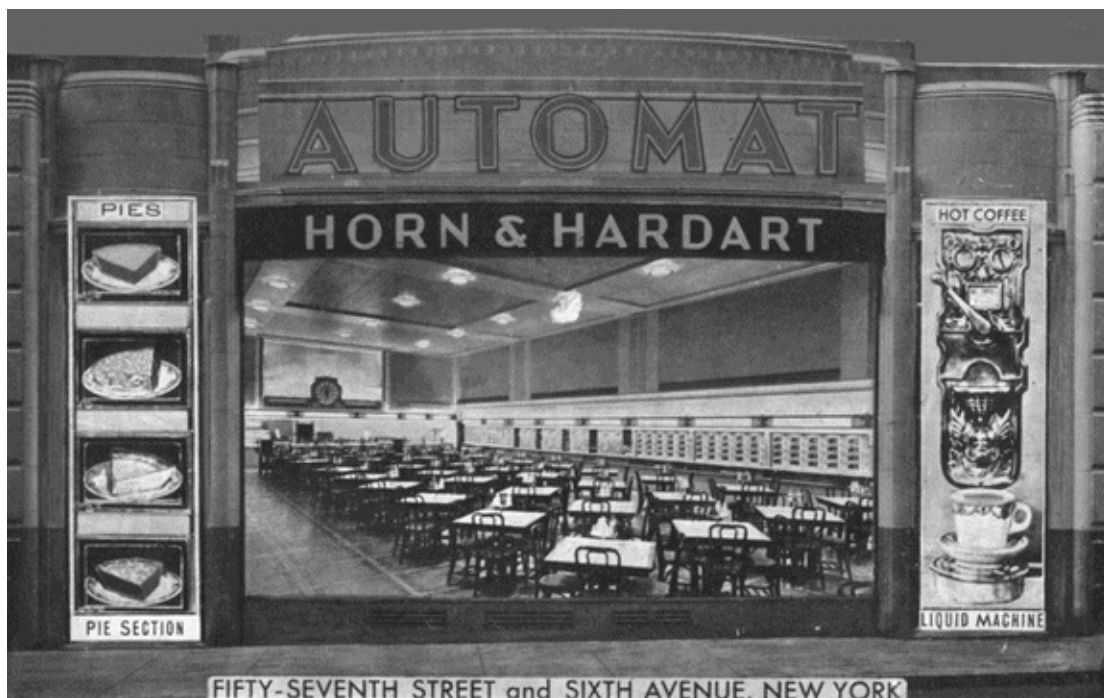
A writer in *La Liberté* explains that so far all the published recipes have been wrong. *Mme.* Poulard's omelette was really the same as that in common use in the environs of Ontorson and Coutances 80 to 100 years ago, and all *Mme.* Poularde did was to revive the art of its preparation instead of following the Parisian recipe. The recipe given by this writer is as follows:

Beat up the eggs well in a basin and pour them into a frying pan in which a good sized piece of butter has been melted and is just turning golden colour; stir in salt and pepper and keep stirring until the mixture is becoming firm. (The exact moment is very important and is judged by long experience and the feel of the fork.) Then add a large spoonful of fresh

thick cream and go on stirring a few minutes. The fire must be very hot, and the mixture well stirred and shaken to prevent its catching. As soon as the frying pan gives forth an odour indicating that the omelette is sufficiently browned the omelette may be slid out into a dish.

FOOD FIRSTS

1902: USA



Horn and Hardart Automat postcard

(Getty Images)

The first Horn & Hardart Automat opened at 1818 Chestnut St., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on this day.

The “waiterless” assembly-line concept was based on a successful German model, and was an immediate success in America.

Customers browsed the dishes visible through the doors of the compartments

CUSTOMERS BROWSED THE DISHES VISIBLE THROUGH THE DOORS OF THE COMPARTMENTS, then made their choices, then slipped the required number of nickels into the slots, turned a knob, and a few moments later, the compartment revolved open and the dish could be retrieved. There was a large choice of food, and it was served chilled or steaming hot as necessary.

FOOD & WAR

1917: USA, World War II

The President's Call to the Women of the Nation:

MY DEAR MR. HOOVER: It seems to me that the inauguration of that portion of the plan for Food Administration which contemplates a national mobilisation of the great voluntary forces of the country which are ready to work towards saving food and eliminating waste admits of no further delay,

The approaching harvesting, the immediate necessity for wise use and saving, not only in food, but in all other expenditures, the many undirected and overlapping efforts being made towards this end, all press for national direction and inspiration.

The women of the nation are already earnestly seeking to do their part in this our greatest struggle for the maintenance of our national ideals, and in no direction can they so greatly assist as by enlisting in the service the Food Administration, and cheerfully accepting its direction and advice. By so doing they will increase the surplus of food available for our own army and for export to the Allies. To provide adequate supplies for the coming year is of absolutely vital importance to the conduct of the war and very strict economy in our food consumption, we cannot hope to fulfil this primary duty.

I trust, therefore, that the women of the country will not only respond to your appeal, and accept the pledge to the food administration which you are proposing, but that all men also who are engaged in the personal distribution of foods will cooperate with the same earnestness and in the same spirit. I give you full authority to undertake any steps necessary for the proper organization and stimulation of their efforts,

Cordially and sincerely yours,

Woodrow Wilson

AMERICAN COLONIAL HISTORY

1630: En Route to America

From the journal of John Winthrop, aboard the *Arbella* en route to start a new colony in America. The ship anchored off what is now Salem, Massachusetts, and Governor Endicott came on board and took the ladies and gentlemen to the shore.

About four in the morning we were near our port. After Mr. Peirce came aboard us, and returned to fetch Mr. (*John*) Endecott, who came to us about two of the clock, and with him Mr. Skelton and Capt. Levett. We that were of the assistants, and some other gentlemen, and some of the women, and our captain, returned with them to Nahumkeck, [now Salem, MA], where we supped with a good venison pasty and good beer, and at night we returned to our ship, but some of the women stayed behind.

In the mean time most of our people went on shore upon the land of Cape Ann, which lay very near us, and gathered store of fine strawberries.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1874: At Sea

From the diary of James Anderson McLauchlan, a Scot aged twenty-one years, en route to Australia aboard the *City of Adelaide*:

[E]xpecting to get into the Trade Winds soon . . . 212 miles . . . preserved meat and preserved potatoes for dinner today, which is a fine change from the salt Horse (as the sailors term it) which had almost taken the skin off my mouth. Our baker made us a piece of short bread for Tea . . . would have been nice but was spoiled in the firing.

Salt Horse is nautical slang for the salted meat—often of very poor quality—which was standard fare on long voyages.

June 13

MAD KING LUDWIG

1885: Bavaria

Ludwig II (“Mad King Ludwig”) dined in one of his favorite hunting cabins in the Tirol on this day. The menu was:

Consomme with liver dumplings

Hechtenkraut and trout with Hollandaise sauce

Lemon sorbet

Chicken fricassee

Pate made from wild venison meat and peas

Fruits in wine jelly and vanilla ice cream with orange sauce.

ZINFANDEL

1848: USA

J. Fiske Allen of Salem exhibited a grape variety called Zinfandel at the Massachusetts Horticultural Society on this day. Within two years it was being grown by another member of the society, Captain F. W. Macondray, in what is now downtown San Francisco.

STRAWBERRIES & POLITICS

1483: London

The English chronicler Raphael Holinshed reported a conversation that took place in the Tower of London on this day, during the planning of the coronation of Edward V. Edward was never crowned, however, as is well known. He and his brother Richard, aged twelve and nine years—the “Princes in the Tower”—

mysteriously disappeared before the coronation could take place. Their uncle and protector, the Duke of Gloucester, became King Richard III, and it has been generally assumed that he was their murderer.

The following passage from Holinshead suggests that Gloucester's apparently casual request for strawberries on this day was to conceal his evil plans, which included the murder of several of those present.

On the Friday (being the 13th of June, 1483) many lords were assembled in the Tower, and there sat in council, devising the honourable solemnity of the king's (the young Edward V.'s) coronation, of which the time appointed then so near approached, that the pageants and subtleties were in making day and night at Westminster, and much victuals killed therefore, that afterwards was cast away. These lords so sitting together, communing of this matter, the Protector [the Duke of Gloucester, who became King Richard III] came in amongst them, just about nine of the clock, saluting them courteously, and excusing himself that he had been from them so long, saying merrily that he had been a sleeper that day. After a little talking with them, he said unto the Bishop of Ely, "My lord, you have very good strawberries at your garden in Holborn; I require you let us have a mess of them." "Gladly, my lord," quoth he. "Would God I had some better thing as ready to your pleasure as that." And therewithal, in all haste, he sent his servant for a mess of strawberries.

William Shakespeare, a little over a century later, incorporated the story in his play, *Richard III*, and certainly implied Gloucester's motives. In the play, the Duke of Gloucester asks the bishop of Ely,

My lord of Ely, when I was last in Holborn,

I saw good strawberries in your garden there;

I do beseech you, send for some of them!

Ely: Marry, I will, my lord, with all my heart.

He goes out, and shortly returning, finds Gloucester gone.

Ely: Where is my lord the Duke of Gloucester? I have sent for those strawberries.

Hastings: His grace looks cheerful and smooth this morning.

There's some conceit or other likes him well,

When that he bids good morrow with such spirit.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1805: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. The party was near the Great Falls of the Missouri on this day, and Silas Goodrich, the expedition fisherman caught six fine trout: “My fare is really sumptuous this evening; buffaloe’s humps, tongues and marrowbones, fine trout parched meal pepper and salt, and a good appetite; the last is not considered the least of the luxuries.”

Lewis described the fish as having “a small dash of red on each side of the first ventral fins the flesh is of a rose red.” It was subsequently named *Oncorhynchus clarki lewisi*, more commonly referred to as the cutthroat trout, the first one known to science.

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt’s journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia: “Brown shot fifteen ducks, mostly *Leptotarsis Eytoni*, GOULD; and Charley a bustard (*Otis Australasianus*), which saved two messes of our meat.”

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1663: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

Up and betimes to Thames Street among the tarr men, to look the price of tarr. . . . To the office and there had a difference with sir W. Batten about Mr. Bowyers tarr, which I am resolved to cross, though he sent me last night a bundle of Company which it may be I shall send back.

might, as a bribe, a barrell of Sturgeon; which it may be I shall send back, for I will not have the King abused so abominably in the price of what we buy by Sir W. Batten's corruption and underhand dealing.

1668: Bristol, England

Samuel Pepys visited Bristol with his wife and her maid, Deb Willet, who had been born there. Her father shows them the town: “[A]nd so brought us back by surprise to his house, where a substantial good house, and well furnished; and did give us good entertainment of strawberries, a whole venison pasty, and plenty of brave wine, and above all Bristoll Milk.”

Bristol Milk: This is a sweet sherry, imported for centuries via the port of Bristol, and so associated with it. It is “metaphorical milk”—said to be as common as milk in that place, or “because . . . such Wine is the first moisture, given Infants in this City.” The first known mention of it is in 1643, when Colonel Fiennes said in explanation of the failure to hold the city against Prince Rupert, “the Bristol garrison may have held out, especially being furnished with a good store of Bristol Milk.”

SUSSEX PUDDING

1749: England

William Ellis, the author of *The Country Housewife's Family Companion*, was at the Cat Inn at Grinstead where he watched the cook making a Sussex Pudding.

There are two ways of making this famous pudding, a flat way and a round way. On the 13th of June, 1749, baiting at the Cat-Inn at East-Grinstead, I saw the cook-maid seemingly put a flat cake of dough on a wooden paddle, about the bigness and shape of a round trencher, into the boiling water of a pot that had meat in it for dinner, which, by a long handle to it, she held in the water till it boiled hardish; then she drew away the wooden paddle or skimmer, and left the pudding-cake to sink and boil longer. Now this pudding, she told me, was made with flower [*sic*], milk, eggs, and a little butter kneaded together, and when boiled enough, it was taken out, slit in two, and butter put into it. Thus she made this Sussex pudding, that was to be eaten with meat instead of bread.—The other way is, to make a round pudding of the same ingredients, which (I suppose) is to be tied up in a

cloth, and in the middle of this pudding they put a piece of butter, and so inclose it with the dough that the butter cannot boil out. When boiled enough, they find the butter run to oil, and so well soaked into the pudding, that they eat it with meat instead of bread, or without meat as a delicious pudding.

Ellis also said, “Pudding is so necessary a part of an Englishman’s food, that it and beef are accounted the victuals they most love.”

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1790: USA

Thomas Jefferson, in New York, wrote to his daughter, Mary Jefferson, then aged eleven years:

New York, June 13, 1790.

I am much pleased with the account you give me of your occupations, and the making the pudding is as good an article of them as any. When I come to Virginia I shall insist on eating a pudding of your own making, as well as on trying other specimens of your skill. You must make the most of your time while you are with so good an aunt who can learn you every thing. We had not peas nor strawberries here till the 8th. day of this month.

1877: USA

Howard Ruede traveled from Pennsylvania to set up a new home in Kansas. In one of his letters home to his family, he talks about the coffee situation:

Most people here don’t drink real coffee because it is too expensive. Green coffee berries sell at anywhere from 40 to 60 cents a pound, and such a price is beyond the means of the average person, Even Arbuckles Ariosa at 35 cents a pound takes too much out of the trade when eggs sell at three to six cents a dozen, and butter at six or eight cents a pound. So rye coffee is used a great deal—parched brown or black according to whether the users like a strong or mild drink. To give the beverage ranker flavour, what is known as “coffee essence” is used. . . . This essence is a hard, black past[e] put up in tins holding some two ounces, with a red or yellow wrapper on

which is printed in bold black type the figure 5000. What that stands for I never heard; I reckon it is a trade mark. Directions for use are also on the wrapper, but I never saw anybody follow ‘em. The women folks use “about so much” for a pot of coffee, and often they have to use the stove-lid lifter, or a hammer, or anything else that is handy to pound it with, to break the hard paste before they can get it out of the tin. It is probably made of bran and molasses. When rye is not used, wheat is sometimes used for coffee, but is considered inferior.

He later describes trying a “new kind of coffee”—a “hot amber-colored drink”—which turns out to be made from millet.

June 14

FOOD & WAR

1943: Albany, New York, USA, World War II, a War-Diet Luncheon

The *New York Times* reported on a luncheon held by the governor on this day.

A war-diet luncheon, dominated by the humble soy bean, was served to sixty-seven guests in the State dining room of the Executive Mansion today in an effort to convince New York’s housewives that palatable and nutritious substitutes for the dwindling meat supply are available.

The lunch which included soy beans in seven different forms, was served to Governor and Mrs. Dewey, members of the State Emergency Commission and representatives of newspapers, magazines, and radio. It was prepared by the regular mansion kitchen staff and pronounced good by the guests, who were asked to comment on the food.

The menu consisted of apple juice, tossed green salad, soy bean sprouts and chicken soufflé, sprouted soy beans and onion, soy bean bread, assorted unrationed spreads, milk and strawberry shortcake.

Recipes for the various dishes served were to be made available to the public. The recipe for the bread, which makes two loaves, was on the menu.

How to make the Bread

Six cups sifted enriched flour, one cake yeast, three and a half tablespoons dry skim milk, two cups water, three teaspoons salt, two and a half tablespoons sugar, nine tablespoons high fat soybean flour and one and a half tablespoons shortening. Two cups of fluid milk may be used in place of the dry skim milk and water.

FOOD & WAR

1940: Paris, France, World War II

Claude Terrail, the son of the owner of the famous restaurant the *Tour d' Argent*, and Gaston Masson, the restaurant manager, walled up part of the cellars of the restaurant on this night to save them from the anticipated German occupation. Terrail had been granted only six hours leave from his airforce unit in Lyon and raced to Paris. With help from other loyal staff, he built a false wall and hid some carefully selected superb wines behind it, disguising the work with cobwebs and dust. The ruse was successful, and when Hermann Goering's agent arrived to requisition this superb wine, he was advised that it had all been drunk.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1841: Australia

From the journal of Edward John Eyre (1815–1901) on an expedition into the inland of Central Australia. He has been resupplied by Captain Rossiter of the whaling ship that rescued them from near starvation.

On the 14th, I landed the stores, to arrange and pack them ready for the journey. They consisted of forty pounds of flour, six pounds of biscuit, twelve pounds of rice, twenty pounds of beef, twenty pounds of pork, twelve pounds of sugar, one pound of tea, a Dutch cheese, five pounds of salt butter, a little salt, two bottles of brandy, and two tin saucepans for cooking; besides some tobacco and pipes for Wylie, who was a great smoker, and the canteens filled with treacle for him to eat with rice. The great difficulty was now, how to arrange for the payment of the various supplies I had been furnished with, as I had no money with me, and it was a matter of uncertainty, whether the ship would touch at any of the Australian

matter of uncertainty, whether the ship would touch at any of the Australian colonies. Captain Rossiter[,] however, said that he had some intention of calling at King George's Sound, when the Bay whaling was over, and as that was the place to which I was myself going, I gave him an order upon Mr. Sherratt, who had previously acted as my agent there in the transaction of some business matters in 1840. To this day, however, I have never learnt whether Captain Rossiter visited King George's Sound or not.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1811: USA

From the *Journal of a Voyage up the Missouri River in 1811* by Henry Marie Brackenridge:

Mr. Bradbury and I, took a walk into the upper village, which is separated from the lower by a stream about twenty yards wide.—Entered several lodges, the people of which received us with kindness, placed mats and skins for us to sit on, and after smoking the pipe, offered us something to eat; this consisted of fresh buffaloe meat served in a wooden dish.—They had a variety of earthen vessels, in which they prepared their food, or kept water. After the meat, they offered us homony made of corn dried in the milk, mixed with beans, which was prepared with buffaloe marrow, and tasted extremely well; also pounded and made into gruel. The prairie turnip, is a root very common in the prairies, with something of the taste of the turnip but more dry; this they eat dried and pounded, made into gruel. Their most common food is hominy and dried buffaloe meat.

1855: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau:

Up river . . . It suddenly began to rain with great violence, and we in haste drew up our boat on the Clamshell shore, upset it, and got under, . . . As soon as the rain was over I crawled out, straightened my legs, and stumbled at once upon a little patch of strawberries within a rod,—the sward red with them. These we plucked while the last drops were thinly falling.

1857: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau: “Mr. Albert Watson’s sons are engaged in lobster-catching. One will get two hundred in a day. . . . They get three cents apiece for them, not boiled.”

June 15

A MONASTIC FEAST

1180: England

It was Trinity Sunday on this day, and a monk known as “Gerald of Wales” (Giraldus Cambrensis) was a guest at the Benedictine Abbey of St. Augustine in Kent. He later wrote an account of the main meal of the day. Monastery food was supposed to be frugal, and the meals eaten in silence—a form of sign language being used for any necessary communication—but as Gerald observed, the reality was far different. He writes in the third person.

Gerald dined in the refectory with the monks of Canterbury. And as he sat there at the high table with the prior and the seniors, he noted two things: the multitude of the dishes and the excessive superfluity of signs which the monks made to one another. For there was the prior giving so many dishes to the serving monks, and they in their turn bearing these as gifts to the lower tables; and there were those, to whom these gifts were brought, offering their thanks, and all of them gesticulating with fingers, hands, and arms, and whistling one to another in lieu of speaking, all extravagating in a manner more free and frivolous than was seemly—so that Gerald seemed to be seated at a stage play or among actors and jesters. It would therefore be more consonant with good order and decency to speak modestly in human speech than with signs and whistlings thus jocosely to indulge in dumb garrulity. And as to the dishes and the number thereof, what shall I say, save that I have oft heard Gerald himself declare that sixteen very costly dishes or even more were placed upon the table in order, not to say contrary to all order. Finally, potherbs were brought to every table but were little tasted. For you might see so many kinds of fish, roast and boiled, stuffed and fried, so many dishes contrived with eggs and pepper by dexterous cooks, so many flavorings and condiments, compounded with like dexterity

to tickle gluttony and awaken appetite. Moreover you might see in the midst of such abundance “wine and strong drink,” metheglin and claret, must, mead, and mulberry juice, and all that can intoxicate, beverages so choice that beer, such as is made at its best in England and above all in Kent, found no place among them. There, beer among other drinks is as potherbs are among made dishes. Such extreme superfluity and extravagance might you behold both in food and drink, as might not only beget loathing in him that partook thereof, but weariness even in him that beheld it. What would Paul the hermit say to this? What Antony, what Benedict, the father and founder of monastic life? Or what would Jerome say, who in the Lives of the Fathers extols with such praise the parsimony, abstinence, and simplicity of the primitive Church, saying among other things that as the Church grew in wealth, so she declined in virtue? Gerald would also at times recount a story, how the monks of St. Swithin of Winchester together with their prior prostrated themselves in the mud before Henry II and complained to him with tears and lamentations that Bishop Richard whom they had as their head in lieu of an abbot, had deprived them of three dishes. And when the king inquired how many dishes were left them, they replied “ten.” “And I,” said the king, “am content in my court with three. Perish your bishop, if he does not reduce your dishes to the number of mine!” To what purpose is this waste, more especially in men professing religion and displaying it in their habit? For these superfluities might have been sold and given to the poor. But this is the color they put upon their behavior, to wit, that the great number of courses served in their order was invented for the sake of amplifying and increasing the alms they give to the poor. Nevertheless, scandal might have been better and more wisely avoided and provision made for their honor and simplicity of life, had they been content with fewer dishes and had they refreshed Christ’s poor out of those superfluities; and thus they would curb their gluttony, lessen the scandal, and increase their alms in a far more salutary way.

PRISON FOOD

1882: Florida, USA

The *Brandon Times* reported on a prison strike precipitated by the food.

As ridiculous as it may seem, it is nevertheless a fact that there was a strike last week among the convicts in the penitentiary. The strike was not for more wages or less hours work, as is the usual case, but for more potatoes, less potatoes, more hominy, less hominy, more codfish, less codfish, *etc.* One complained of too much of a certain kind of food, and his next door neighbor complained of too little of the same food but the big cry was “potatoes,” which for the present the State Board has struck off from the bill of fare on account of the price. Other things have been substituted in their place however. . . . The strikers were put into the north cell room, where the cells are entirely unfurnished, and where they had to sleep, if they could sleep in the din and confusion on a stone floor. They were kept in this place without food and drink and were told that they could have neither until they submitted, and as soon as any one should signify his willingness to go to work and to behave he would be released at once. . . . The bill of fare which they got in the north cell room was hardly the strawberries and cream that they had hoped to secure by their strike, and they slowly succumbed, and yesterday every man except Brady, went back to work feeling very cheap. Their complaints about the food are entirely groundless, for it is a far famed fact that no other institution of the kind in this country feeds its inmates better than the Wisconsin State Prison. Their meals are selected from the following articles: beef, bacon, brawn, eggs, corn-beef, pork, beans, peas, butter, tea, coffee, codfish, hominy, flour, onions, syrup, sugar, turnips, and until very recently potatoes, and enough of each kind is furnished. One half pound of solid meat is given to each convict daily and they help themselves to bread, taking as much as much [*sic*] as they wish. After all it does seem cruel that these innocent men cannot have the delicacies [*sic*] of the season.

FOOD SAFETY

1999: Belgium

The Belgian Health Ministry ordered all Coca-Cola products to be withdrawn from the shelves on this day, and advised the public not to drink any products they had in their homes. The order was in response to illness occurring in one hundred students from six schools, which was alleged to be due to drinking from cans (all apparently dispensed from vending machines) that had an odd odor on the outside of the can. France, Luxembourg, and The Netherlands subsequently also banned or restricted sale of Coca-Cola company products

also banned or restricted sale of Coca-Cola company products.

On June 16, the Coca-Cola company withdrew 15 million cans and bottles of their products from the market. It was estimated that in addition to damage to the brand image of the company's products, the financial cost was of the order of \$200 million.

Belgium lifted the ban on all but vending machine dispensed cans on June 22.

No toxicological cause was found for the incident, and it was subsequently attributed to be largely due to psychosomatic reactions to the unpleasant odor and mass hysteria.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

1999: San Diego, USA

Twenty-four-year-old Nicholas Vitalich was charged with assault with a deadly weapon for allegedly repeatedly hitting his girlfriend with a large unfrozen tuna fish weighing 10 kilos. He was subsequently sentenced to one year of therapy.

ALE OR BEER?

1436: England

A Royal Writ of Henry VI protected the brewers of the relatively new beverage—beer. Ale, not beer, had been the traditional beverage in Britain for centuries.

Writ to the Sheriffs to make proclamation for all brewers of "Bier" "within their bailiwick to continue to exercise their art as hitherto, notwithstanding—the malevolent attempts that were being made to prevent natives of Holand and Seland and others who occupied themselves in brewing the drink called "Biere" from continuing their trade, on the ground that such drink was poisonous and not fit to drink, and caused drunkenness, whereas it was a wholesome drink, especially in summer time. Such attacks had already caused many brewers to cease brewing—and would cause greater mischief unless stopped.

Witness the King at Westminster, 15 June, 14 Henry VI.

Henry wanted to keep on good terms with his Flemish, Hollander, and Zealand subjects, who had established a thriving beer-brewing business in England. They were under attack from temperance factions who claimed it was an unwholesome intoxicant and had already managed to force many of the beer brewers out of business.

FOOD & THE LAW

1988: Europe, Cucumber Regulations

The European Economic Community Regulation No. 1677/88 laid down the quality standards for cucumbers. One of the regulations determined the acceptable degree of “bend”: “Cucumbers must be ‘well shaped and practically straight,’ the maximum arc of curvature allowed for Class I cucumbers being 10mm per 10 cm of length of cucumber.”

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1768: Britain

As Captain James Cook’s ship the *Endeavour* was being prepared for his first voyage, the Victualling Board prepared for a trial of sauerkraut as a preventative for scurvy—the scourge of long voyages for centuries.

Order Admiralty loth that His Majesty’s Bark the Endeavour at Deptford being fitted out for a distant voyage it will afford an opportunity for a fair tryal to be made of the efficacy of Sour Krout against the Scurvy (etc.). Write the Commanding Officer, a proportion for twelve months for seventy men will be sent aboard at the rate of two pounds per man per week; desire he will let us know how the same shall be found to answer for our reporting it to their Lordships accordingly.

Cook’s difficulty with the experiment was that he had to overcome the sailor’s prejudice against sauerkraut, which he did by stealth (*see* April 13).

1770

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks:

Some few presents today but no trade at all. We found ourselves today involvd in an unexpected difficulty with regard to the boats: they were loaded with provisions which their owners must live upon or starve, in consequence of which they ask leave to go and take them out and are allowd to do so as much as they can eat. We are not able however to distinguish the true owners, so many avail themselves of this indulgence by stealing their neighbours which we cannot prevent, indeed in a few days more the whole consisting cheifly of fish (cured to keep about that time) will be spoild.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1857: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau:

Monday . . . I shouldered my pack and took leave of my friends,—who thought it a dreary place to leave me,—and my journey along the shore was begun. . . . Mrs. Ellis agreed to take me in, though they had already supped and she was unusually tired, it being washing-day. They were accustomed to put up peddlers from time to time, and had some pies just baked for such an emergency. At first took me for a peddler and asked what I carried in my bag.

1907: At Sea

From the diary of Harry Sinclair Clark, an account of a journey from Glasgow to Nelson, British Columbia, aboard the steamer TSS *Cassandra*:

1907 Saturday 15th day of June, one week from date of sailing. Alex and I waited till the second table was served at dinner time, there is no crushing at this table, the majority going to the first table. We had soup with bread and semolina for dessert, the soup was good, the semolina was not. After dinner we retired to our bunks for a rest and a short sleep. Alex always takes a short nap after his dinner. . . . If the food had been good and well cooked I might have enjoyed myself more. . . . I append the menu given in the Saloon at Dinner time to-day, 2nd Cabin.—

Kidney Soup

Beef Olives

Haricot of Ox Tail

Roast Beef and Baked Potatoes

Corn Beef

Cabbage, Mashed Potatoes, Carrot

Queen of Puddings, Semolina Pudding

Apple Fritters, Small Pastry

Tea Fruit Coffee

June 16

BLOOMSDAY

1904

Today is “Bloomsday”—the day that James Joyce fans around the world celebrate his writing, and in particular his novel *Ulysses*. The day is named for the chief protagonist Leopold Bloom, an Irish Jew and newspaper advertising salesman in Dublin. All of the events of the novel take place over a single day—June 16, 1904.

Mr. Leopold Bloom ate with relish the inner organs of beasts and fowls. He liked thick giblet soup, nutty gizzards, a stuffed roast heart, liver slices fried with crustcrumbs, fried hencods’ roes. Most of all he liked grilled mutton kidneys which gave to his palate a fine tang of faintly scented urine.

Kidneys were in his mind as he moved about the kitchen softly, righting her breakfast things on the humpy tray.

Bloom goes out to the “ferreted pork-butcher” and in the window “[a] kidney

Bloom goes out to the beleaguered porkbutcher, and in the window [a] kidney oozed bloodgouts on the willow patterned dish: the last.” He fears that the customer already in the shop will buy it, but she does not, so he parts with three pence and puts the “moist tender gland” in his pocket—and almost burns it when he cooks it for breakfast.

FOOD & WAR

1775: USA, Revolutionary War

The U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps was formed on this day and has played a role in victualing the army on a day-to-day basis as well as during every major military effort since then.

RED VELVET CAKE

1960: USA

The earliest known published recipe for the well-known red velvet cake featured as the recipe of the week in the Texas newspaper the *Denton Record-Chronicle* on this day.

Red Velvet Cake

- 2 ounces of red food coloring
- 3 tablespoons cocoa
- ½ cup shortening
- 2 beaten eggs
- 1½ cups sugar
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 2¼ cups cake flour
- 1 teaspoon salt

- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 teaspoon soda
- 1 tablespoon vinegar

Mix food coloring with cocoa and set aside. Cream shortening and sugar, add beaten egg, then cocoa-coloring mix. Beat well. Sift flour and salt three times, and along with buttermilk. Add vanilla and beat well again. Remove from mixer and add mixture of vinegar and soda to batter. Mix by hand until blended. Bake in two nine inch pans, greased but not floured, at 350 degrees for 30 to 35 minutes. Cool, then ice.

- **Icing**
- 1 stick soft butter
- ½ cup shortening
- 1½ cup powdered sugar
- 2 tablespoons flour
- ⅔ cup sweet milk (at room temperature)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

Cream butter and shortening with sugar. Add flour, 1 tablespoonful at a time, add sweet milk and vanilla. Beat a long time with mixer until icing is light and fluffy. When cake is frosted, sprinkle with coconut. This cake has a fine flavor and good keeping qualities—if there's any left to keep. It's best kept in a cool place during the summer. The icing is as light as whipped cream.

FOOD FIRSTS

1657: England

The first advertisement for chocolate appeared in the *Public Advertiser*: “In Bishopgate St, in Queen’s Head Alley, at a Frenchman’s house, is an excellent

West Indian drink called chocolate to be sold, where you may have it ready at any time and also made at reasonable rates.”

Chocolate at this time was a beverage only: it was bought either pre-prepared or in the form of hard cakes of cacao powder.

CHEESE

1759: Ipswich, England

An article in the *Ipswich Journal* bemoaned the poor quality of Suffolk Cheese—a staple for the British Navy for over a century.

To Suffolk Farmers.—The Suffolk Cheese being so badly made for some years past, the Lords of the Admiralty have thought it fit to exclude it from the Royal Navy for one year. By it being made better it is recommended for the future, it being no worse than two meal sleet leaving only the morning milk of which cheese is made or four meal, putting in all the morning milk on the day the cheese is made. It is hoped the dairymen will desist from making cheese from November till the beginning of May as it is of bad quality and has brought great odium to the country cheese.

AMERICAN COLONIAL HISTORY

1608: America

Captain John Smith, the first European to explore the Chesapeake Bay, wrote of the rich fish catches in the Potomac:

[T]he River of Potowmack. Fish lying so thick with their heads above water. For want of nets (our barge driving amongst them) we attempted to catch them with a frying pan: but we found it to be a bad instrument to catch fish with. Neither better fish, nor more plenty, had any of us ever seen in any place so swimming in water.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1862: Australia

One of the search parties looking for Burke and Wills, led by John McKinlay, was in the Gilbert River region. McKinlay did not know that Burke had long since died as they had set off before the news reached civilization. McKinlay's party was itself in strife, with all their provisions gone. John Davis wrote on this day, "The old camel is to be killed! Old and worn out, with sores all over him, he will be a nice morsel, without the slightest trace of fat to be seen." (See July 5 and 30)

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1789: Britain

From the diaries of John Byng, 5th Viscount Torrington, written during his horseback tours of England and Wales:

Ashbourne, Derbyshire, If travellers expect, when in the country, to revel in fruit, to eat trout, and to purchase venison, they will be sadly mistaken; for fruit is not to be bought, trout are not to be caught, and venison (good) is not even to be had in gentlemen's houses, as they delay, relative to the season, too long e'er they killed deer, and for age and flavour, never wait long enough, by three years!

June 17

DINNER IN THE TIME OF HENRY VIII

1514: England

This day in 1514 was Trinity Sunday, and at the Monastery of the Holy Trinity in London a number of gentlemen were entertained. The Public Records Office of 1864 summarized the event in an account of the letters and papers of the reign of Henry VIII.

Mr. Westby, Mr. Deny, and Mr. Blagge, of the Exchequer, Doctor Taylore, Mr. Corbett, Mr. Blondell, Mr. Eylmer, Mr. Chamley, Mr. Oliver Turner, Mr. Thuryston, Mr. Ellis, draper, Mr. Long, proctor, and Mr. Exmew, were entertained. The first course consisted of:—"brues to pottage," chickens and bacon, green geese, roast capon, pike, pheasant, custard. "The second

course”:—“joly to pottage,” pigeons, rabbits, “heronzew,” “breame,” “quinces bak,” tart. “The first course for convent”:—“brues to pottage,” chickens and bacon, green geese, capon, custard. “The second course for the same”:—“joly to pottage,” pigeons, rabbits, “quinces bake.”

DISH OF THE DAY

1896

The famous chef Auguste Escoffier invented a new dish to celebrate a significant event in the history of Arctic exploration that happened on this day. In 1896, the Norwegian explorer Fridjof Nansen and his companion F. H. Johansen had left their ship *Fram* stuck in pack ice and had been attempting to reach the North Pole overland. They were forced to turn back by bad weather, however, and were overwintering in Franz Joseph Land, Greenland. On June 17 members of the English Jackson-Harmsworth expedition chanced upon them, and provided them passage home to Norway.

Escoffier later catered for a dinner held to celebrate this meeting, and the dish he created also honored the men of another, ill-fated, expedition. In July 1879, an American expedition had set off aboard the USS *Jeanette*, intent on searching for a quick route to the North Pole. The ship became stuck in pack ice in September, and for twenty-one months drifted slowly slowly northwest. On June 12, 1881, the pack ice began to crush the ship, and the crew of thirty-three men were forced to abandon her. She sank the next morning, and the men began a seemingly hopeless overland journey to the Siberian coast, hauling the small boats and sledges loaded with what supplies they had been able to retrieve. Only two men returned.

Escoffier’s dish was *Suprêmes de volaille Jeanette* (Breast of Chicken Jeanette). It is a suitably pale, cold, and glossy dish served on a bed of ice.

Suprêmes de volaille Jeanette

Breast from a cold poached chicken, white chaudfroid sauce, tarragon leaves, aspic jelly, truffles.

Cut each half of the breast into 3–4 slices and coat with white chaud-froid sauce and decorate with blanched tarragon leaves.

Line the bottom of a square dish with a light layer of very clear aspic jelly. When set, arrange some slices of truffle on it and place the slices of chicken on top. Cover with a thin layer of half-set aspic jelly.

Serve surrounded with crushed ice.

I have given the name of “Jeanette” to this exquisite preparation in memory of the good ship La Jeanette which in 1881 went on a voyage of exploration to the North Pole and was caught in the ice. A single survivor returned from that unfortunate expedition.

FOOD & ROYALTY

1939: Newfoundland

King George VI and the queen visited Holyrood in Newfoundland while on a trip aboard the Royal Yacht. The locals celebrated the event later in the day, with a dance. Lobsters were served, one bun with half a lobster costing a dollar.

FOOD & WAR

1864: USA, Civil War

From the diary of Frances W. Wallace, wife of Confederate officer Philip Hugh Wallace:

A very rainy disagreeable day. Phil received a note from Mrs. Conley inviting him and his friends who serenaded with him last night to accompany him to take tea with her. He declined as he did not wish to have her take the trouble of an entertainment because he had given her a serenade. She and some other friends who had been very attentive to us and who were very fond of music he serenaded last night. At Mrs. Johnson's they had a fine supper set for them, hot coffee, biscuit, salad, custard, cake, etc. All day it has been raining. I made two pincushions that we have very much needed out of the gaskets of the cannon that we got at Selma, Alabama.

FOOD & THE LAW

1930: USA

The Federal Plant Patent Act was signed on this day. The act made it possible to [patent](#) new varieties of asexually propagated plants (that is, those that are propagated by cuttings, such as fruit trees). Plants propagated by tubers, such as potatoes, were exempt from the laws on the grounds that the part of the plant used for propagation is the same as that used for food.

The law was prompted by the work of Luther Burbank, the agriculturalist and inventor who was responsible for the development of more than eight hundred different strains and varieties of plants during his career.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1666: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys: “So down to the Milke-house and drank three glasses of whey.”

Whey is the watery part of milk that remains after the milk is coagulated, as in the first stage of cheese manufacture. It was (and is) considered a refreshing beverage with health benefits.

1796: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde: “All kinds of Meat very high indeed at present. My Butcher charged me to Day for Beef 6 ½^d per lb. For Mutton also 6^d. ditto. For Lamb also 6^d. ditto. Recd. For Butter to day, at 9 ½^d, 0. 4. 4 ¼ . Dinner to day, Neck of Mutton boiled and a Goose.”

1857: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau: “This morning had for breakfast fresh eels from Herring River, caught in an eel-pot baited with horseshoe clams [*sic*] cut up.”

June 18

THE ALLIED SOVEREIGNS' BANQUET

1814: London, England

A banquet was given on this day by the Corporation of London for the Prince Regent (the future George IV) and his guests, Tsar Alexander I and his bad-mannered sister the Grand Duchess Catherine, and Frederick William III, King of Prussia. Seven hundred guests were entertained, including many “Princes, Ministers, and Ambassadors.” As it turned out, the Prince Regent himself was “prevented from attending by some cause,” necessitating the Duke of York to stand in for him.

The event caused much excitement in England, as would be expected. According to the *Annual Register*:

The Dinner was as sumptuous as expense or skill could make it, and was served entirely on plate, . . . Samuel Truner, Esq., one of the Directors of the Bank of England. Very handsomely presented a fine Turtle for the occasion, which was the first imported in the season, and arrived in time to be served. . . . large Baron of Beef, with the Royal Standard, was placed upon a stage at the upper end of the Hall, in view of the Royal Table, attended by the Serjeant Carvers and one of the principal Cooks, in proper costume. Fifteen toasts were drunk.

Naturally, the *Times* also reported the event, and although it did not give details of the menu, it was noted that “[t]he dinner, though it had suffered from waiting, was sumptuous, and principally served on [silver] plate.” The *Times* also noted that

[t]his, indeed, and similar occurrences, are not to be considered as mere festive parties; they are, when connected with their causes and consequences, political events of no small moment, the memory of which will remain so long as the present generation exists, and the record of them will form a part of the history of the unions of the Empire which the Sovereigns respectively are born to govern.

U.S. STATE FOOD

2005: Texas

The legislature of the state of Texas determined that the official state bread would be *pan de campo*, a flatbread also called camp bread or cowboy bread. Yeast starters and sourdough were too difficult to maintain on the trail, so camp bread is leavened with baking powder. It is classically cooked in a Dutch oven, which also happens to be the official Texas cooking implement. The bill was introduced by State Rep. Ryan Gullen who said that it was “the staff of life for *vaqueros*.”

FOOD & WAR

1864: USA, Civil War

From the diary of Frances W. Wallace, wife of Confederate officer Philip Hugh Wallace:

It is still raining, fear too much for the crops. We are invited to take tea at Professor Battle's, brother to Gen. Battle, met Mrs. and Dr. Johnson, Judge and Mrs. Hopkins. We had a fine supper, not to be surpassed in Yankeedom; breads, biscuits, waffles, lightbread, and wafers, broiled chicken, chipped ham, salad, fruit cake, pound cake, custard, whortleberries and cream, plums and fruit of different kinds, tea and coffee. Mr. Kelly, our landlord, has gone away, feel uneasy for fear he will come back on a [drunken] spree. I hope we shall leave here soon.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1620: At Sea

From the journals of Jens Munck's voyage in search for a northwest passage to India in 1619–1620:

When the ice drifted away from the ship, we got a net for catching flounders out of the sloop; and when the ebb had run out one quarter, we went out dryshod and set it. When the flood returned, God gave us six large trout, which I cooked myself, while the others went on board *Lamprenen* to fetch wine, which we had not tasted for a long time, not of us having had an

appetite for it.

As we now thus everyday got fresh fish which was well cooked, it comforted us much, although we could not eat any of the fish, but only the broth, with which we drank wine, so that by degrees we recovered somewhat. At last, we got a gun on short and shot birds, from which we obtained much refreshment; so that day by day we got stronger and fairly well in health.

1806: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day Meriwether Lewis wrote: “[W]e hope by means of the fish together with what deer and bear we can kill to be enabled to subsist untill our guide arrives without the necessity of returning to the quawmash flats.”

1817: Australia

From John Oxley’s journal of his expedition in 1817 to explore the course of the Lachlan River. The party kill a dingo—a native dog not usually used as an article of food.

Some of our party bean even now to anticipate the resources of famine, for a large native dog being killed, it was pronounced, like lord Peter’s loaf, in the Tale of a Tub, to be true, good, natural mutton as any in Leadenhall market, and eaten accordingly: for myself, I was not yet brought to the conversion of Martin and Jack.

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt’s journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

As all our meat was consumed, I was compelled to stop, in order to kill one of our little steers. It proved to be very fat, and allowed us once more to indulge in our favourite dish of fried liver. Although we were most willing to celebrate the anniversary of the battle of Waterloo, and to revive our own ambitious feelings at the memory of the deeds of our illustrious heroes, we

ambitious feelings at the memory of the deeds of our illustrious heroes, we had nothing left but the saturated rags of our sugar bags; which, however, we had kept for the purpose, and which we now boiled up with our tea: our last flour was consumed three weeks ago; and the enjoyment of fat cake, therefore, was not to be thought of. Should any of my readers think these ideas and likings ridiculous and foolish, they may find plenty of analogous facts by entering the habitations of the poor, where I have not only witnessed, but enjoyed, similar treats of sugared tea and buttered bread.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1670: London, England

From the diary of John Evelyn:

Dined at Goring House, . . . Lord Stafford rose from the table, in some disorder, because there were roses stuck about the fruit when the dessert was set on the table; such an antipathy, it seems, he had to them as once Lady Selenger also had, and to that degree that, as Sir Kenelm Digby tells us, laying but a rose upon her cheek when she was asleep, it raised a blister: but Sir Kenelm was a teller of strange things.

1904: At Sea

A “Lady Correspondent” to the *Guardian* wrote of the food on a voyage to America:

To America for two pounds

SS Philadelphia, From a lady correspondent.

One must not start with the preconception that a steerage passage across the ocean has the nature of an open-air cure, but a woman traveller can still reach the end of her voyage with some (not excess) energy left to help in the empire-building of Britain beyond the seas.

. . . As a judge of menus I was out of court for a few days. But when at last I was able to take a serious interest in life and its most important episodes I was quite taken by surprise by the quality of the food and the cooking. Hors d'oeuvres and savouries were not in the bill of fare, but what we did get

a soups and savouries were not in the bill of fare, but what we did get were three good courses of soup, meat, and pudding. I had no sympathy with one lady to whom a man—not her husband, he sat stolidly by—hurriedly called the stewardess's aid. The woman was dying, averred the sympathetic other man. To the stewardess the dying woman declared with all the emphasis of which she was capable that a herring was the one thing without which she would surely die. Then to the steerage cook's credit must also be placed the oatmeal porridge which formed my daily delight at breakfast. Out of Scotland I have not tasted better, and I found it an unfailing resource when other more highly flavoured dishes misliked a palate rendered very picky by sea motions.

June 19

THE SUPERDREADNOUGHT

1915: USA

A banquet was held on this day to celebrate the launching of the superdreadnought USS *Arizona*. One of the speakers was assistant secretary of the navy, Franklin D. Roosevelt, who would be president in 1941 when the *Arizona* was destroyed at Pearl Harbor.

Little Neck Clam Cocktails

-

Strained Chicken Gumbo, in Cups

Marseilles Rolls

-

Queen Olives Salted Almonds Hot House Radishes

Sweet Midget Gherkins

-

Baltimore Crab Flakes, A La Newburg in Cassolettes

-

-

Sirloin of Beef, Pique, with Fresh Mushrooms

Surfine Peas Bermuda Potatoes

-

Sorbet National

-

Half Phila Squab Chicken, with Cresses

-

Waldorf Salad

-

Fancy Forms of Ice Cream

Biscuit Tortoni Assorted Cakes Fancy Macaroons

Gateaux Lady Fingers

-

Chocolate Mints

-

Demi Tasse

FOOD FIRSTS

1587

The Japanese word for roasted whole soy flour—*kinako*—appeared for the first

time in morning menu in Master Sotan's Tea Ceremony Cookery Menu Diary (*Sotan Chakai Kondate Nikki*).

1886: USA

The *Mitchell Daily Republican* (South Dakota) reported a new beverage.

A New Drink in Atlanta

The newest Atlanta drink is "milk shake." You get it at the soda fountains. The mixer of cooling beverages pours out a glass of sweet milk, puts in a spoonful of crushed ice, puts in a mixture of unknown ingredients, draws a bit of any desired syrup, shakes the milk in a tin can like a bartender mixes lemonade, sprinkles a little nutmeg on the foaming milk, sets it out for you, and you pay 4 cents.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1866: USA

William L. Lance, of Plymouth, Pennsylvania, was granted Patent No. 55,677 for his "Improved Serving Table." His concept was a self-waiting table "driven by steam or some other power." He described its overall function:

All persons at this table are put upon an equality and free to act for themselves, and these shelves so arranged as not only to contain the full bill of fare, and that kept hot by lamp or otherwise, but also to contain all the necessary dishes knives, forks, spoons, glasses, &c., and also so arranged as to carry the dishes that have been used off into the pantry P, behind the screen, where they are removed by the servant stationed at that point for that purpose, and where also are the persons stationed to supply and replenish the revolving or moving table b, with shelves c d e f. The carver and his assistants are also stationed behind the screen, which we here term "pantry," P, to supply continually the revolving or moving table b and the shelves c d e f. The dishes, after the guest has finished with them, are put upon the lower shelf or table b, which is hid from view by means of a lid or curtain.

FOOD & THE LAW

1997: England

The “McLibel” case ended in England after 314 days, making it the longest running trial in English history. The case of *McDonald’s Corporation v Steel and Morris* began with the publication in 1986 of a pamphlet titled *What’s Wrong with McDonald’s—Everything They Don’t Want You to Know* by environmental activists Helen Steel and David Morris.

The ten-year dispute and the prolonged trial was highly controversial on a number of points. The sitting judge, Mr. Justice Bell, ruled that although there was insufficient evidence presented to prove many of the allegations made against McDonald’s, he was satisfied that some of the claims were proven. Among Justice Bell’s comments were that McDonald’s did exploit children and that their advertising about the nutritional value of their food was misleading.

The insufficient evidence meant that the judge ruled that Steel and Morris’s pamphlet was in fact libelous, and awarded damages of £120,000 against them. An appeal on the basis that Steel and Morris had been denied a fair trial ultimately ended up in the European Court of Human Rights, which voted in favor of Steel and Morris.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1806: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806:

On this day Meriwether Lewis wrote,

[T]he Fishermen had been more unsuccessful, they returned without a single fish and reported that they could find but few and those they had tryed to take in vain. [T]hey had broke both their gigs which were of indian fabrication made of bone. . . . [T]hey took one fish this evening which proved to be salmon trout much to our mortification, . . . we determined to send out all the hunters in the morning in order to make a fair experiment of the nrlactficalhility of our being able to subsist at this place

experiment of the propriety of our being able to subsist at this place and if not we shall move the day after to the Quawmash flatts. . . . Cruzatte brought me several large morells which I roasted and eat without salt pepper or grease in this way I had for the first time the true taist of the morell which is truly an insippid taistless food. [O]ur stock of salt is now exhausted except two quarts which I have reserved for my tour up Maria's River and that I left the other day on the mountain.

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

Whilst walking down by the lagoon, I found a great quantity of ripe *Grewia* seeds, and, on eating many of them, it struck me, that their slightly acidulous taste, if imparted to water, would make a very good drink; I therefore gathered as many as I could, and boiled them for about an hour; the beverage which they produced was at all events the best we had tasted on our expedition: and my companions were busy the whole afternoon in gathering and boiling the seeds.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1662: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

Home to dinner, where I find Mr. Moore. . . . And then with the last chest of Crusados to Ald. Blackwells; by the same token, his lady, going to take coach, stood in the shop and having a gilded glassful of perfumed comfits give her by Don Duarte de Silva, the Portugall merchant that is come over with the Queene, I did offer a taste, and so she poured some out into my hand; and though good, yet pleased me the better coming from a pretty lady.

Comfits: These are small sweetmeats made by coating seeds, nuts, or small pieces of ginger or orange rind and suchlike in sugar by repeatedly dipping them in a syrup and then drying them.

How to cover all kinds of seeds, or little pieces of Spices, or Orange or Lemon Pill, with Sugar for Comfits

First of all you must have a deep bottomed Bason of Brass or Latin, with two ears of Iron to hang it with two Cords, over some hot coals. You must also have a broad Pan to put Ashes in, and hot Coals upon them.

You must have a Brass Ladle to let run the Sugar upon the Seeds. You must have a Slice of Brass to scrape away the Sugar from the sides of the hanging Bason if need be.

Having all these things in readiness, do as followeth;

Take fine white Sugar beaten, and let your seeds and Spice be dry then dry them again in your hanging Bason: Take to every two pounds of Sugar one quarter of a pound of Spices or Seeds, or such like. If it be Aniseeds, two pounds of Sugar to half a pound of Aniseeds, will be enough. Melt your Sugar in this manner; put in three Pounds of sugar into the Bason, and one Pint of water, stir it well till it be wet, then melt it very well and boil it very softly until it will stream from the Ladle like Turpentine, and not drop, then let it seeth no more, but keep it upon warm Embers, that it may run from the Ladle upon the seeds. Move the seeds in the hanging Bason so fast as you can or may, and with one hand, cast on half a Ladle full at a time of the hot sugar, and rub the seeds with your other hand a pretty while, for that will make them take the sugar the better; and dry them well after every Coat. Do thus at every Coat, not only in moving the Bason, but also with stirring of the Comfits with the one hand, and drying the same, in every hour you may make three pounds of Comfits; as the Comfits do increase in bigness, so you may take more Sugar in your Ladle to cast on.

—The queen-like closet; or, Rich cabinet stored with all manner of rare receipts for preserving, candying & cookery. Very pleasant and beneficial to all ingenious persons of the female sex, (1670) by Hannah Wolley

June 20

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1820: Britain

An early British patent for food preservation was granted John Valance for a method of packing or casking hops, so as to be out of the reach of atmospheric influences, and which would enable them to be kept

as long as is pleased—perhaps half a century—even without being damaged. The hops packed in metallic or wooden cases, by means of a strong hydraulic pressure, or otherwise; the joints, or crevices, were to be luted with pitch and rosin, softened and toughened in texture by the addition of a little tallow.

1845: USA

Peter Cooper, an inventor and founder of the “Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art,” obtained Patent No. 4,084 for an “Improvement in the Preparation of Portable Gelatine.” He described his method as that of

making a transparent concentration of solidified jelly containing all the ingredients fitting it for table use, in a portable form, and requiring only the addition of a prescribed quantity of hot water to dissolve it, when it may be poured into glasses or molds and when cold will be fit for use.

This improvement is effected by using Cooper’s refined American isinglass, (which your petitioner would recommend both on account of its superior quality and far greater cheapness), the Russian isinglass, or any other pure form of gelatine, which may be taken either in the solid and dry form, in which it is usually found for sale (in which case it must again be reduced to a liquid state by the application of water and heat), or it may be taken directly from the manufactory in its liquid state, thus saving all the expense and risk of its subsequent preparation, as well as the necessity of again reducing it to a fluid form. To this liquid gelatine I would then add the following ingredients: For every hundred pounds of isinglass or gelatine, four hundred pounds best white sugar, the juice or acid of twelve hundred lemons, or an equivalent of acid of limes, the peel or rind of three hundred lemons, eight hundred eggs, or a sufficient quantity of other finings, one pound peach-pits, one pound cinnamon, one pound mace, one pound allspice, half-pound of cloves, with such other spices and such

variations of the quantities of all as will suit the tastes of different persons. To this solution of gelatine, with the various ingredients incorporated with it, a sufficient quantity of water should be added to reduce the whole mass to a fluid of such consistency as would admit (after being boiled about ten minutes) of being passed through a fine filter. This filter may be constructed in any of the various forms now used in the refining of sugar. After this hot fluid has been passed through the filter, and thus rendered perfectly transparent, it is then to be concentrated or condensed by the evaporation of the great part of the water to such consistency as will insure it to keep for any length of time in a state of perfect preservation; or, if preferred, the water may be entirely evaporated and the whole reduced to a solid form. This may be effected by any of the following methods: by boiling in cacao by any of the ordinary methods used in the refining of sugar; by forcing heated air into, through, or on the surface of the fluid; by evaporating in open pans heated by steam or otherwise, or by solar evaporation. In all these methods, however, care must be taken that the fluid be not brought up to 212° Fahrenheit, as violent and long-continued heat injures the strength of the gelatin. This transparent jelly, having been reduced by either of the above methods to a proper consistence, may, while yet hot, be drawn into jars or molds of any convenient form, and will be ready for sale. To this concentrated or solidified jelly it is only necessary to add a sufficient quantity of hot water to produce at any time a jelly of any consistency that may be required.

Previous to this product, making a gelatin dessert was a very laborious process involving the slow boiling and clarifying of a stock made from high-collagen substances such as calves heads, veal bones, or hartshorn.

In 1895, a cough syrup manufacturer, Pearle B. Wait, purchased the patent and developed a packaged gelatin dessert, which his wife named Jell-O.

FOOD & WAR

1856: Crimean Peninsula, Crimean War

Sir John Hall, inspector general of hospitals, wrote a testimonial letter from headquarters camp in the Crimea on this day, in which he lauded the work of Mary Seacole.

I have much pleasure in bearing testimony to Mrs. Seacole's kindness and attention to the sick of the Railway Labourers' Army Work Corps and Land Transports Corps during the winter of 1854 and 1855. She not only [nursed], from the knowledge she had acquired in the West Indies, but, what was of as much or more importance she charitably furnished them with proper nourishment which they had no means of obtaining except in the hospital and most of that class had an objection to go to the hospital, particularly the Railway labourers and the men of the Army Works Corps.

Mary Seacole was a woman of mixed Scottish and Creole descent, and set off at her own expense to help feed and nurse the men at the front line in the Crimea (her color preventing her from being accepted in any official capacity). She set up what she called her "British Hotel"—"a mess-table and comfortable quarters for sick and convalescent officers," and provided succor for wounded servicemen on the battlefield.

In her memoir, *The Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands* (1857), she describes a different side to the situation in the Crimea that we expect.

All who were before Sebastopol will long remember the beautiful autumn which succeeded to so eventful a summer. . . . Pleasure was hunted keenly. Cricket matches, picnics, dinner parties, races, theatricals, all found their admirers. My restaurant was always full, and once more merry laughter was heard, and many a dinner party was held, beneath the iron roof of the British Hotel. Several were given in compliment to our allies, and many distinguished Frenchmen have tested my powers of cooking. You might have seen at one party some of their most famous officers. At once were present a Prince of the Imperial family of France, the Duc de Rouchefoucault, and a certain corporal in the French service, who was perhaps the best known man in the whole army, the Viscount Talon. They expressed themselves highly gratified at the carte, and perhaps were not a little surprised as course after course made its appearance, and to soup and fish succeeded turkeys, saddle of mutton, fowls, ham, tongue, curry, pastry of many sorts, custards, jelly, blanc-mange, and olives. I took a peculiar pride in doing my best when they were present, for I knew a little of the secrets of the French commissariat.

Seacole also gave several of her recipes in the text, including the following:

Crimean Christmas-pudding

Will the reader take any interest in my Crimean Christmas-pudding? It was plain, but decidedly good. However, you shall judge for yourself:—One pound of flour, three-quarters of a pound of raisins, three-quarters of a pound of fat pork, chopped fine, two tablespoonfuls of sugar, a little cinnamon or chopped lemon, half-pint of milk or water; mix these well together, and boil four hours.

SOCIAL FORCES AT WORK

1962: France, the Artichoke Wars

Breton farmers dumped artichokes in the street on this day to protest low prices. It was the third such protest in two years. A report in an American newspaper said,

A gourmet's dream turned into farmer's nightmare recently when artichokes glutted the market in France. Overproduction made the aristocratic artichoke as inexpensive as the plebeian potato. Breton growers were so violently unhappy about the low prices that they started France's third "artichoke war" in two years.

The farmers dumped tons of artichokes on a main road, took up positions behind the green barricade, and fired the spiky missiles at the gendarmerie.
...

The French government is now considering an artichoke subsidy, and farmers are studying ways of making the succulent vegetable more popular. . . . If each French man, woman, and child would eat just one artichoke a year the surplus would become a shortage.

FOOD & POLITICS

1997: Colorado, USA

The Brown Palace Hotel, Denver, Colorado, in 1997, was the location for the twenty-third "Summit of the Eight." Two different lunch menus were served to other delegates while President Clinton met with Boris Yeltsin. Jacques Chirac.

and Romano Prodi. The Canadian foreign minister and his guests sat down to sesame-crust sea bass with cucumber sambal and cilantro-ginger vinaigrette, while the Japanese minister for international trade and his party enjoyed crab cakes, veal rolantini, and Marsala cream.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769: Tahiti

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks:

“*Otahite*” This morn early Oborea and Co came to the tents bringing a large quantity of provisions as a present, among the rest a very fat dog. We had lately learnt that these animals were eat by the Indians and esteemed more delicate food than Pork, now therefore was our oportunity of trying the experiment. He was immediately given over to Tupia who finding that it was a food that we were not acustomd to undertook to stand butcher and cook both. He killd him by stopping his breath, holding his hands fast over his mouth and nose, an operation which took up above a quarter of an hour; he then proceeded to dress him much in the same manner as we would do a pig, singing him over the fire which was lighted to roast him and scraping him clean with a shell. He then opened him with the same instrument and taking out his entrails pluck &c. sent them to the sea where they were most carefully washd, and then put into Cocoa nut shells with what blood he had found in him. The stones were now laid and the dog well coverd with leaves laid upon them. In about two hours he was dressd and in another quarter of an hour compleatly eat. A most excellent dish he made for us who were not much prejudicd against any species of food; I cannot however promise that an European dog would eat as well, as these scarce in their lives touch animal food, Cocoa nut kernel, Bread fruit, yams &c, being what their masters can best afford to give them and what indeed from custom I suppose they prefer to any kind of food.

1817: Australia

From John Oxley’s journal of his expedition in 1817 to explore to course of the Lachlan River:

As to water, we did not see the least signs of any during the whole day. After proceeding between nine and ten miles, we stopped for the evening on some burnt grass, which existed in sufficient quantity; but, although we procured a few gallons of water for ourselves, not all our researches could find a sufficiency for the horses. The dogs killed a pretty large emu, which was a most luxurious addition to our salt pork, of which alone we were all well satiated.

1861: Australia

From the notes and journals of members of the ill-fated Burke and Wills expedition to cross Australia from south to north in 1860–1861. On this day Wills wrote:

I am completely reduced by the effects of the cold and starvation. King out for nardoo. Mr Burke at home pounding seed, but getting very weak in the legs. I cannot understand this nardoo at all, it certainly will not agree with me in any form. We are now reduced to it alone, and we manage to get from four to five pounds per day between us.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1667: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys. Tea was rapidly becoming popular in London. “Home and there found my wife making of tea, which Mr. Pelling the Apothecary tells her is good for her cold.”

1792: Britain

From the diaries of John Byng, 5th Viscount Torrington, written during his horseback tours of England and Wales: “*Giggleswick, Yorkshire*. I had an early dinner of beefsteaks, lamb chops, pickled salmon, and tart, and for supper last night, a trout, lamb chops, potted trout, and tart; so that under the article *eating* I have not been overcharged.”

June 21

DINNER ABOARD THE SS YUKON

1914: At Sea

The folks aboard the SS *Yukon* of the White Pass and Yukon Route sat down to the following bill of fare on this night of the solstice:

Soup

Mock Turtle

Fish

Boiled Codfish Family Style

Relishes

Fairbanks Radishes

Queen Olives

Boiled

Corned Beef and Cabbage

Entrees

Spaghetti Italian

Rice Fritters Fruit and Sauce

Joints

Prime Ribs Beef au Jus

Roast Leg Pork Apple Sauce

Vegetables

Mashed Potatoes

Asparagus

Dessert

Cocoanut Custard Apple Pie

Plum Pudding Hard & Brandy Sauce

Ice Cream a la Artaud

Assorted Nuts

Assorted Cake

Christy's Crackers Cheese

Tea Coffee

A CARELESS MEAL

1791: France

Louis XVI and his family fled Paris for Varennes to escape the revolutionary forces. They were in disguise as ordinary travelers. The king called for a meal break in the town of Sainte Menehould for the local specialty of *pieds de pork* (pigs' trotters). It appears that Louis was complacent about the risk, the stop was unscheduled, and his military support was not close by. The local postmaster apparently recognized the king from his portrait on a gold coin, and raised the alarm. The family members were arrested in Varennes, and escorted back to Paris, to prison, and, ultimately, to the guillotine.

Here is a recipe for an English version of the dish:

Pigs Trotters with Breadcrumbs

Pieds de Cochon à la Sainte Menehould

Boil some pigs feet au natural, steep them in melted butter, season with salt and pepper, and cover them with as many breadcrumbs as possible. Boil them over a very slow fire, and serve them up with mustard.

RESTAURANTS & HOTELS

1961: London, England

“Cranks” opened in Carnaby Street on this day. Cranks became the first vegetarian restaurant chain in the United Kingdom.

1969: Ohio, USA

The British restaurant chain Arthur Treacher’s Fish & Chips opened its first American premises in Columbus, Ohio, on this day.

PROTECTED DESIGNATION OF ORIGIN

1996

A number of famous British food products were granted PDO status on this day. They included the following: Jersey Royal Potatoes, Orkney Beef and Lamb, Stilton Cheese (white Stilton and blue Stilton), West Country Farmhouse Cheddar, Becon Fell traditional Lancashire Cheese, Single Gloucester, Swaledale Cheese and Swaledale Ewe’s Cheese, Bonchester Cheese, Buxton Blue, Dovedale Cheese,

European products to gain PDO status on the same day included the Netherlands—Gouda and Edammer; Italy—Parmigiano Reggiano, Gorgonzola; France—Brie de Meaux, Camembert de Normandie.

FOOD & WAR

1898: USA, Spanish-American War

From the diary of Joseph Beiler, 1st Ohio Volunteer Cavalry; his troop was still in Camp Thomas, Georgia: “This morning we got ten days rations we had oat meal for breakfast with milk & sugar.”

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

[S]hower of rain fell, but cleared up at midnight. We travelled nine miles northwest to lat. 16 degrees 9 minutes 41 seconds, over a country very much like that of the two preceding stages, and past several fine lagoons, richly adorned by the large showy flowers of a white *Nymphaea*, the seed-vessels of which some families of natives were busily gathering: after having blossomed on the surface of the water, the seed-vessel grows larger and heavier, and sinks slowly to the bottom, where it rots until its seeds become free, and are either eaten by fishes and waterfowl, or form new plants. The natives had consequently to dive for the ripe seed-vessels; and we observed them constantly disappearing and reappearing on the surface of the water. They did not see us until we were close to them, when they hurried out of the water, snatched up some weapons and ran off, leaving their harvest of *Nymphaea* seeds behind. Brown had visited another lagoon, where he had seen an old man and two gins; the former endeavoured to frighten him by setting the grass on fire, but, when he saw that Brown still approached, he retired into the forest. We took a net full of seeds, and I left them a large piece of iron as payment. On returning to the camp, we boiled the seeds, after removing the capsule; but as some of the numerous partitions had remained, the water was rendered slightly bitter. This experiment having failed, the boiled seeds were then (Unclear:) tied with a little fat, which rendered them very palatable and remarkably satisfying. The best way of cooking them was that adopted by the natives, who roast the whole seed-vessel. I then made another trial to obtain the starch from the bitter potatoes, in which I succeeded; but the soup for eight people, made with the starch of sixteen potatoes, was rather thin.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1870: England

From the diary of the Reverend Francis Kilvert. He wrote about a picnic at Snodhill.

There was plenty of meat and drink. the usual things. cold chicken. ham and

tongue, pies of different sorts, salads, jam and gooseberry tarts, bread and cheese. Splendid strawberries from Clifford Priory brought by the Haigh Allens. Cup of various kinds went round, claret and hock, champagne, cider and sherry, and people sprawled about in all attitudes and made a great noise.

June 22

AN ANTARCTIC MID-WINTER FEAST

1911: Antarctica

Robert Falcon Scott and the members of his party celebrated mid-winter day in the manner of Christmas.

The sun reached its maximum depression at about 2.30 P.M. on the 22nd, Greenwich Mean Time: this is 2.30 A.M. on the 23rd according to the local time of the 180th meridian which we are keeping. Dinner tonight is therefore the meal which is nearest the sun's critical change of course, and has been observed with all the festivity customary at Xmas at home.

At tea we broached an enormous Buzzard cake, with much gratitude to its provider, Cherry-Garrard. In preparation for the evening our "Union Jacks" and sledge flags were hung about the large table, which itself was laid with glass and a plentiful supply of champagne bottles instead of the customary mugs and enamel lime juice jugs. At seven o'clock we sat down to an extravagant bill of fare as compared with our usual simple diet.

Beginning on seal soup, by common consent the best decoction that our cook produces, we went on to roast beef with Yorkshire pudding, fried potatoes and Brussels sprouts. Then followed a flaming plum-pudding and excellent mince pies, and thereafter a dainty savoury of anchovy and cod's roe. A wondrous attractive meal even in so far as judged by our simple lights, but with its garnishments a positive feast, for withal the table was strewn with dishes of burnt almonds, crystallised fruits, chocolates and such toothsome kickshaws, whilst the unstinted supply of champagne which accompanied the courses was succeeded by a noble array of liqueur bottles from which choice could be made in the drinking of toasts.

We had come through a summer season and half a winter, and had before us half a winter and a second summer. We ought to know how we stood in every respect; we did know how we stood in regard to stores and transport.

Buzzard cake: This is something of a mystery. One of the few historical references to it is the one in Scott's diary. There was a Messrs. Buzzard who was a fashionable cake maker in Victorian London, who was well known for his sugar decorations, so perhaps Cherry-Garrard had brought one along with him, or perhaps Scott was using the phrase to refer to a generic but fine cake.

A CORONATION DINNER

1906: Trondhjem, Norway

After the coronation of King Haakon VII, there was the obligatory banquet, for which the following was the menu:

Consommé Alexandra

Saumon du Court-Bouillon

Pomme nature. Sauce Riche.

Selle d'Agneau à la St. Mandé

Foie gras truffé à la Royale.

Poulardes de France à la Broche.

Salade de Légumes à la Mayonnaise

Glace à la Viking

-

Dessert

Fruits

FOOD & THE LAW

1795: Britain

An act for regulating the shipping and carrying of slaves in British vessels from the coast of Africa was passed on this day.

The act included quite specific instructions as to the daily fare for the “officers, mariners, seamen, seafaring men, landsmen, and boys; [t]hat they shall be daily and regularly supplied with good wholesome victuals, and a portion of wine or spirits, as heretofore specified; the said provisions to be issued and dressed in the manner in which it is done on board his Majesty’s ships of War, and to be served out to the ship’s company as follows:

- *Sunday*,—One pound and an half of beef, containing sixteen ounces to the pound, and a pint of flour.
- *Monday*,—One pound of pork, containing sixteen ounces to the pound, and half a pint of pease.
- *Tuesday*,—One pint of oatmeal, and two ounces of butter, and four ounces of cheese; or, 1 pound of stock fish, with one eighth of pint of oil, and a quarter of a pint of vinegar, in lieu of butter and cheese.
- *Wednesday*,—The same as Monday.
- *Thursday*,—The same as Sunday.
- *Friday*,—The same as Tuesday.
- *Saturday*,—The same as Monday.

Each person, besides, to have six pounds of bread *per* week; a quarter of a pint of spirits, or half a pint of wine. . . . In lieu of pease and oatmeal may be served rice, Indian yams, or calavances.”

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1806: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day Meriwether Lewis wrote:

Coast and back in 1897-1898. On this day, Frederick Lewis wrote:

[T]his morning by light all hands who could hunt were sent out; the result of this days perfo[r]mance was greater than we had even hoped for. [W]e killed eight deer and three bear. . . . [W]e gave Whitehouse a few beads which Capt. C. had unexpectedly found in one of his waistcoat pockets to purchase the fish.

1849: USA

Alonzo Delano (1809–1874) traveled overland to California in 1849–1851. On this day he wrote:

The train encamped in a depression on its bank, and in a short time the tents were pitched; camp-fires were burning brightly; supper was prepared, and with a glorious appetite, I sat down to a rich feast of antelope steak, and enjoyed, with a double zest, a good meal, through their kind hospitality. Dear reader, if you are an Epicure, for heaven's sake, walk to California across the plains, and you will learn to enjoy with a zest you know not, the luxury of a good meal.

FOOD & WAR

1898: USA, Spanish-American War

Joseph Beiler (1870–1925) of the 1st Ohio Volunteer Cavalry, Troop B, did not end up on active service. At this time he was in Camp Thomas, Georgia. “*Wensday 22* Today we traded of 300 lbs. of salt pork 100 lbs. of beans two cases of bakeing powder for 50 lbs. of rolled oats 4 hams once case of prunes 20 cans of milk 4 buckets of jelly two bottles of tomatoes sause.”

June 23

DINNER WITH QUEEN VICTORIA

1887: England

Queen Victoria was at Windsor on this date during her Golden Jubilee year. The

DINN OF rare FOR HER dinner was as follows:

Potages.

A la Chiffonade Au Lièvre à l'Anglaise.

Poissons.

Les Truites bouillies. Les Filets de Merlans frits.

Entrees.

Les Croquettes à la Milanaise.

Les Côtelettes d'Agneau aux Concombres.

Les Pigeons braises aux Pois.

Relevés.

Les Dindoneaux à la Périgéux.

Les Longues de Veau piques à la Crème. Roast Beef.

Rots.

Les Cailles bardées. Les Poulets.

Entremets.

Les Haricots verts à la Poulette. Les Mayonnaises de Poulets.

Les Gateaux de Riz à l'Ananas.

Les Biscottes à la Chantilly. Les Crèmes à la d'Orléans.

Side Table.

Cold Fowl. Cold Beef. Tongue.

U.S. STATE FOOD

1993: Massachusetts, USA

The Massachusetts legislature determined that “[t]he baked navy bean shall be the official bean of the commonwealth, and that it was the original bean in the ‘famous and venerable’” Boston Baked Bean.

Beans baked slowly in a pot have been around for as long as there have been beans and pots, they are not peculiar to Boston, although the city has clearly made one version particularly its own. Here is an early recipe:

Boston Baked Beans

The *Massachusetts Ploughman* gives the following recipe for cooking this famed Yankee dish. We can vouch for its excellence. Take two quarts of middling sized white beans, three pounds of salt pork, and one spoonful of molasses. Pick the beans over carefully, wash and turn about a gallon of soft water to them in a pot; let them soak in it lukewarm over night; set them in the morning where they will boil til the skin is very tender and about to break, adding a teaspoonful of saleratus. Take them up dry, put them in your dish, stir in the molasses, gash the pork and put it down in the dish, so as to have the beans cover all but the upper surface: turn in cold water till the top is just covered; bake and let the beans remain in the oven all night.

—*Southern Cultivator*, Volumes 6–7, 1847

Saleratus is sodium or potassium bicarbonate used as a leavening agent—it is an early form of baking soda.

YALE & THE SPICE TRADE

1672: Madras, India

Elihu Yale (1649–1721) arrived in Madras, India, as a clerk of the British East India Company on this day. He stayed in India for twenty-seven years, working his way up through the ranks of the company, and investing successfully in precious stones. He made his fortune, with which he founded and endowed Yale

University.

The European monopoly of the spice trade lasted until 1780, when it was broken by Jonathan Carnes who dealt directly with growers in Indonesia, buying black pepper and sending back to Salem in his own ships.

PERRIER WATER

1863: France, Perrier Water

Napoleon III, via the secretary-minister of agriculture and commerce, granted the right to exploit the mineral waters of Les Bouillens (Perrier Spring) in Vergeze, for medicinal purposes (“For the good of France”). Prior to this it was illegal to bottle and sell springwater in France. The *Compagnie De La Source Perrier* was founded in 1906.

A STRANGE CODFISH STORY

1626: England

A large codfish, split open by a fishwife at a Cambridge Market was said to contain a slim volume of three religious treatises by John Frith: *A Preparation to the Cross*, *A Mirrour or Glasse to Know Thyselfe*, and *A Brief Instruction to Teach a Person Willingly to Die*.

Mr. Mead, a fellow of Christ’s College, Cambridge, was a witness to the event:

I saw all with mine own eyes, the fish, the maw, the piece of sailcloth, the book . . . only I saw not the opening of the fish, which not many did, being upon the fish-woman’s stall in the market, who first cut off his head, to which the maw was hanging, and seeming much stuffed with somewhat, it was searched, and all found as aforesaid.

Frith (1503–1533) was a Protestant reformer who was accused of heresy while at Oxford; he was imprisoned in the fish cellars there by Cardinal Wolsey, and ultimately burned at the stake for his beliefs. The treatises were published the following year as *Vox Piscis*. It is difficult to believe that the old rivalry between Oxford and Cambridge did not have something to do with this no doubt allegorical tale.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1817: Australia

From John Oxley's journal of his expedition in 1817 to explore the course of the Lachlan River:

A flock of large kangaroos was seen for the first time since we quitted the Lachlan; also many emus and bustards. Our dogs killed three kangaroos and two emus. . . . After going eight miles and a quarter, we suddenly came upon the banks of the river; I call it the river, for it could certainly be no other than the Lachlan, which we had quitted nearly five weeks before. . . . We resolved to try if our old friends, the fish, still continued in the streams; in the course of a short time five fine ones were caught: this most seasonable refreshment had an excellent effect in raising our hitherto depressed spirits; and eternal Hope again visited us in the form of extensive lakes and a better country.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1662: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys: "He (*Sir W. Warren*) had me into his house, which is most pretty and neat and well furnished. After a glass, not of wine, for I could not be tempted to drink any, but a glass of mum, I well home by water."

Mum was a type of beer originally made in Braunschweig (Brunswick) in Germany. At first it was made entirely from wheat malt, although at later times barley malt was also used. It was strong, flavored with hops and various herbs, and aged for a couple of years before being sold. It was reputed to have medicinal benefits, such as being "wholsom for Melancholy Flegmatic People, and for those whose Food is coarse Bread and Cheese, Flower'd [i.e., floured] Milk, Herbs and lean Potages," as well as being "very great in the Gravel, and against inward Bruises."

1732: Lapland

Carl von Linné, the Swedish botanist also known as Linnaeus, visited Lapland to

record the plant life. He made a lot of observations about the customs and habits of the people he met on his journey. On this day he was in Lulea.

The use of milk among the inhabitants of Westbothnia is very great; and the following are the various forms in which it serves them for food:

1. Fresh, of which a great deal is taken in the course of the day.
2. Fresh boiled.
3. Fresh boiled, and coagulated with beer, which is called *ölost*.
4. Sour milk, deprived of its cream, and capable of being cut.
5. Sour milk eaten with its cream.
6. Butter, made, as usual, of cream shaken till its oily part separates and floats.
7. Buttermilk, what remains after the butter is made.
8. Cheese, made of fresh milk heated, coagulated with calves' rennet, then deprived of its whey and dried.
9. This whey being boiled, the scum which rises is repeatedly collected, and called *walle*.
10. The remaining whey is used instead of milk or water in making bread.
11. The same fluid kept for a long time till it becomes viscid, is preserved through the winter, and called *syra*.
12. The whey of cheese boiled to a thick consistence is denominated *mesosmör*, and with meal is added to the preceding.
13. *Sötost*, or Sweet Cheese, is made of fresh milk boiled till it is partly wasted, and the remainder, of the thickness of pap or gruel, is eaten fresh.
14. *Mjölost*, Meal Cheese, is milk coagulated with rennet, mixed with meal, and boiled.

15. *Tatmjölk*, is fresh milk poured on leaves of Butterwort, *Pinguicula*, as already mentioned.
16. *Servet* milk.
17. *Gös-mjök*.
18. *Lapmjölk*, is milk mixed with sorrel leaves, (*R. Acetosa*,) and preserved till winter in the stomach of a reindeer, or some other animal.
19. The milk of the reindeer is placed in a cellar to prevent its quickly turning sour, in order to obtain the more cream; if it freezes, they thaw it again.

June 24

A CANCELED BANQUET

1902: London, England

The original date planned for the coronation of Edward VII was June 26, and preparations were well underway when the king became ill, and had an emergency

appendectomy on this day.

The royal chefs were suddenly faced with dealing with the provisions for the planned fourteen course banquet for two hundred and fifty guests. The poor of London were the lucky recipients of—amongst other things—300 legs of mutton, 2,500 quails and other birds, huge quantities of fish (including sturgeon and caviar), and large quantities of fresh strawberries and asparagus.

Nobility from all around the world were staying at the Carlton Hotel in London, where the chef was none other than the famous Escoffier. He had planned a suitably extravagant banquet for the hotel guests for the evening, but was apparently quite sanguine when the news came.

The problem of the cancellation of long-planned for special dinners applied right

across the country. Many towns, villages, hotels, and pubs had arranged celebratory dinners. A correspondent to the *Cotswold Journal* on July 5, 1902, wrote:

The disappointment at the abandonment of the Coronation dinner and festivities at Moreton led to scenes of a most disgraceful character in the High Street on Wednesday night among a certain section of the crowd. At the meeting of the general committee held in the morning, it was decided to dispose of the provisions by selling them, with the idea of keeping funds for another time. But when it came to the disposal of the meat etc[.], there was a very large and hostile crowd.

RECIPE FOR THE DAY

1394: France

Le Ménagier de Paris is a book of household lore and recipes. It contains 196 recipes and numerous menus. The author recommends that a recipe for a mixture of preserved fruits and vegetables (a *compôte*) is begun on this day.

This Is The Way To Make Compote

Note that you must start by St. John's Day which is the twenty-fourth day of June.

First, take five hundred new walnuts, and be sure that neither the shell nor the kernel are yet formed and that the shell is also neither too hard nor too tender, and peel them all round, and then pierce them through or in a cross. And then put them to soak in water from the Seine or a spring, and change it every day: and they must soak ten to twelve days and they will become black and when you chew one you will not be able to taste any bitterness; and then put them on to boil in sweet water and let them boil just for the length of time it takes to say a Miserere, and until you see that there are none which are too hard or too soft. Then empty the water, and put them to drain on a screen, and then boil a sixth of honey or as much as they need to be all covered, and the honey should be strained and skimmed: and when it is cooled down to just warm, add your walnuts and leave them two or three days, and then put them to drain, and take as much of your honey as they can soak in, and put the honey on the fire and make it come to a good boil

and skim it, and take it off the fire: and put in each hole in your walnuts a clove in one side and a little snip of ginger in the other, and then put them in the honey when it is lukewarm. And stir it two or three times a day, and at the end of three days take them out: and gather up the honey, and if there is not enough, add to it and boil and skim and boil, then put your walnuts in it; and thus each week for a month. And then leave them in an earthenware pot or a cask, and stir once a week.

Take, around All Saints Day (November 1), large turnips, and peel them and chop them in quarters, and then put on to cook in water: and when they are partially cooked, take them out and put them in cold water to make them tender, and then let them drain; and take honey and do the same as with the walnuts, and be careful not to over-cook your turnips.

Item, on All Saints, take carrots as many as you wish, and when they are well cleaned and chopped in pieces, cook them like the turnips. (Carrots are red roots which are sold at the Halles in baskets, and each basket costs one *blanc*.)

Item, take choke-pears and cut them in four quarters, and cook them like the turnips, and do not peel them; and do with them neither more nor less than with the turnips.

Item, when gourds are in season, take those which are neither too hard nor too tender, and peel them and remove the seeds and cut into quarters, and do the same to them as to the turnips.

Item, when peaches are in season, take the hardest and peel them and cut them up.

Item, around St. Andrew's Day, take roots of parsley and fennel, and scrape them, and chop them into small pieces, and split the fennel and remove the hard part, and do not do this to the parsley, and prepare them exactly the same way as told above, neither more nor less.

And when your preserves are ready, you can use them in the following recipe.

First, for five hundred walnuts, take a pound of mustard-seed and half a pound of anise, a quatrain and a half of fennel, a quatrain and a half of

coriander, a quatrain and a nail of caraway seed, which is a seed eaten in dragees, and grind all these things to powder: and then put all these things through the mustard mill and soak them thick in very good vinegar, and put in an earthenware pot. And then take half a pound of horse-radish, which is a root sold by herbalists, and scrape it thoroughly and chop it as small as you can and grind it in a mustard-mill, and moisten with vinegar.

Item, take half a fourth of clove stem, half a fourth of meche ginger, half a fourth of nutmegs, half a fourth of grains of paradise, and grind them all to powder.

Item, take half an ounce of saffron from Orte dried and beaten in an ounce of red cedar, a root bought at a herbalist's and called "cedar for making knife-handles." And then take twelve pounds of good honey which is hard and white and melt it on the fire, and when it is well-cooked and skimmed, let it sit, then strain it, and cook it again: and if it still produces scum, you will have to strain it again, if it is not convenient to let it cool; then moisten your mustard with good red wine and half as much vinegar and put in the honey. Soak your powdered spices in wine and vinegar and put in the honey, and boil your cedar pieces a little in hot wine, and then add the saffron with the other things, and another handful of coarse salt.

Item, and after these things, take two pounds of grapes known as Digne grapes, which are small and have no seeds or pips inside, and which are fresh, and pound them thoroughly in a mortar and moisten in good vinegar, then strain through a strainer, and put with the other things.

Item, if you add four or five pints of must or cooked wine, the sauce will be better.

FOOD & THE LAW

1637: Isle of Man, Britain

Certain regulations pertaining to the sale of grain and other goods were laid down at a Court of Tynwald (the Parliament of the Isle of Man) on this day. The intent was clearly to protect the customer from unscrupulous sellers. A few of the regulations are outlined below.

Holden in the Isle of Mann, the 24th Day of June, in the Yeare of our Lord God 1637, it was Enacted, Established, and Confirmed, by the Sovereign Liege Lord of the Island, James, Lord Strange, and by the Barrons, 24 Keyes, Commons, and Inhabitants of the said Island, assembled at this Court, as, followeth: viz.

Imprimis, Forasmuch as great Complaints are made to the Lord by the Commons and poor Sort of Inhabitants of the Island, that they are much impoverished by Engrossers, Forestalled, and Reqrators; be it enacted, established, and confirmed, by Authority of this Court, that noe Person or Persons within the said Island shall by himself, or by his Servants or Agents, by way of Engrossing, Forestalling, or Reqrating, buy any Corne, or Graine, or other Merchandize or Provision, to sell the same againe, upon Paine to forfeit the Goodes soe bought, or the Value thereof, to the Lord of the Island.

Whatsoever Person or Persons shall by any Means regrate, obtaine, or get into his or their Hands or Possession, in any Fair or Markett, any Corne, Wine, Fish, Butter, Cheese, Candles, Tallow, Sheep, Lambs, Calves, Swine, Pigs, Geese, Capons, Hens, Chickens, Pigeons, Conneys, or other dead Victuall whatsoever, that shall be brought to any Faire. or Markett within the said Island to be sold, and do sell the same againe in any Faire or Markett, holden or kept in the same Place, or in any other Fair or Markett within four Miles thereof, shall be accompted, reputed, and taken, for a Reqrator or Reqrators.

Itm. That all Weights and Measures which are kept in the said Island to buy or sell by, shall all be brought to the Comptroller for the Lord there, and made to agree with the Assize of the Lord's Weights and Measures, and then sealed by the said Comptroller or his Deputy, and to pay for the Tryall and Sealing of every Weight and Measure to the said Comptroller or his Deputy, the Fee of *jd* only; and if any Person or Persons have or use in his House, or elsewhere, after the Feast Day of All Saints next, any Weight or Measure to buy or sell by the same, and the same being not sealed and allowed as afforesaid, shall forfeit to the Lord *Ixs*.

SCHOOL FOOD

1748: England

John Wesley's school at Kingswood opened on this day. Initially for the laity, it later became a school for the sons of Methodist ministers. Wesley's belief was "[t]rain up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." The rules were strict, and the life hard. The boys

rose at four o'clock, winter and summer, and excepting short periods allowed for breakfast, dinner and supper, they prayed, learnt lessons and worked in the garden or the house until eight o'clock at night. There were no holidays throughout the year, and on every day, except Sunday, a full day's work was to be done.

The food for these growing boys consisted of "milk porridge and water porridge alternatively for breakfast; bread and butter, and cheese and milk by turns for supper; and meat with apple puddings for dinner, except on Fridays, when the fare was vegetables and dumplings."

U.S. STATE FOOD

2004: Louisiana, USA

The Louisiana legislature determined that "[t]here shall be an official state cuisine. The official state cuisine shall be gumbo."

Gumbo is a type of thick soup or stew which is considered to have evolved in Louisiana. It can be made with a wide variety of meat or shellfish (often a mixture of these) and classically contains celery, bell peppers, and onions. It has a unique texture due to the inclusion of okra or *filé* powder.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

1675: At Sea

From the diary of Henry Teonge, the chaplain aboard *HM Assistance*:

Midsummer Day, and wee are calmed still over against the Isle of Wyte. . . . This day 2 seamen that had stolen a peice or two of beife, were thus shamed: they had their hands tyd behind them, and themselves tyd to the maine mast, each of them a peice of raw beife tyd about their necks in a coard. and the beife hobbing before them like the knott of a crevatt [cravat]:

and the rest of the seamen came one by one, and rubd them over the mouth with the raw beife; and in this posture they stood 2 howers.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1793: Galapagos Islands

From the journal of James Colnett (1753–1806), on an expedition on behalf of whaling interests. He was in the Galapagos on this day.

The guanans are small and of a sooty black, which if possible, heightens their native ugliness. Indeed, so disgusting is their appearance that no one on board could be prevailed on to take them as food. I found the turtles however, far superior to any I had before tasted. Their food, as well as that of the land tortoise, consists principally of the bark and leaves of trees, particularly of the mangrove, which makes them very fat; though in rainy seasons, when vegetation is more general, their food may be of a more promiscuous nature. The green turtles are extremely fat and would produce a large quantity of oil. Their shell is also very beautiful, and if that should be an article of any value, a small vessell might make a very profitable voyage to this place. The land tortoise was poor at this season, but made excellent broth.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1664: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

Up, and out with Capt. Witham in several places again to look for Oates for Tanger. And among other places, to the City Granarys, where it seems every company have their granary, and obliged to keep some a quantity of Corne always there, or at a time of scarcity to issue so much at so much a [bushel].

June 25

FOOD & WAR

1948: Post–World War II

The Berlin Airlift (“Operation Vittles”) began. The first major incident of the Cold War was precipitated by the Soviet Union’s blockade of supplies into Berlin in June 1948. The people of West Berlin were facing imminent starvation. On the 24th, Russian authorities had announced that due to “technical difficulties” there would be no more rail traffic to and from Berlin, and on the 26th they were to announce that food would not be supplied to the sectors of Berlin that were under Western administration. In response to these actions, the United States military government in Europe ordered the commencement of an airlift of food into Berlin, to keep the citizens supplied until the crisis was resolved. On the 26th, thirty-two flights transported eighty tons of food, milk, and medicines into Tempelhof Airport. The first British aircraft flew into the city on June 28. The airlift was enormously successful. It had originally been anticipated that it would last three weeks, but by early 1949 it was still ongoing, with more food being delivered into Berlin by military aircraft than had been happening by rail before June 1948. The operation finally ended on May 12, 1949, when the blockade was lifted.

FOOD AND LAW

1846: Britain

The House of Lords finally passed the Repeal of the Corn Laws Act, which formally passed into law when it received Royal assent the next day. The Corn Laws had been very unpopular since they were formulated.

THE POTATO FAMINE

1842: England

The Illustrated London News carried the following article about the evolving potato famine in Ireland:

The following is the latest account from this distressed district:—“Galway, June 20 (From our own correspondent.)

Since the disturbance of Monday last this town has been perfectly tranquil. The fishermen took to their boats and went to sea early in the week, and provisions having experienced a seasonable reduction in price, no further commotion is apprehended. It was feared that the country people, hearing of the violence committed on Monday, would not bring their goods into the market; and on Wednesday the supply was scanty from that cause. But an abundance of potatoes was brought in on Saturday, and sold at fourpence a stone. This is not an extravagant price, though a fraction over threepence always pinches the poor man; but in the present dearth of employment any price at all must distress him. Of the scarcity of money you may judge from this fact, of which I can assure you from personal observation, that at Loughrea, in this county, when the famishing people were riotously assembled to oppose the forestallers in the potato market, eggs were offered for sale at five for a penny, and chickens, quite fit for the pot, were sold for sevenpence a couple.”

FOOD BUSINESS

2005: USA

The Walt Disney Company issued a statement to the effect that they would remove shark’s fin soup from the wedding banquet menus offered at Hong Kong Disneyland, which was due to open in September: “After careful consideration, and a thorough review process, we were not able to identify an environmentally sustainable fishing source, leaving us no alternative except to remove shark’s fin soup from our wedding banquet menu.” The company had come under considerable pressure from conservationists who claimed that the shark fin trade was driving the species to extinction, and that it was against the company’s own environmental policy.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1825: USA

The *Missouri Intelligencer* ran the following piece on this day, written by Capt. William Becknells:

Mr. Patten, If the following narrative of my late tour in the upper province of Mexico, is sufficiently interesting to deserve a place in your columns, you are at liberty to publish it.

On the 5th of November last, I left Santa Cruz with a party of nine men, employed in my service, with a view of trapping on the Green River, several hundred miles from Santa Fe.

. . . We suffered every misery incident to such an enterprise in the winter season, such as hunger and cold—but were exempted from robbery. The flesh of a very lean horse, which we were constrained to break our fast with, was at this time, pronounced excellent. But when his bones were afterwards served up, as a matter of necessity, they were not as well relished, but had nearly proved fatal to the whole party. We found to our cost, that our stomachs, although tolerably commodiously disposed, were not equal to the task of digesting bones. You can readily imagine, that we were in that deplorable condition where it would be justifiable to adopt the philosophy of the ancient Romans, and give odds to die. But such is not the practice of Missourians. Although we were forty days from settlements, the snow three or four feet deep, and our small stock of horses, our principal reliance for effecting a retreat, considered sacred, so that to have eaten them would have been like dining upon our own feet, we still contrived to supply our tables, if not with the dainties of life, with food of the most substantial kind. For instance, we subsisted two days on soup made of a raw hide we had reserved for sealing our moccasins; on the following morning the remains were dished up into a hash. The young men employed by me had seen better days, and had never before been supperless to bed, nor missed a wholesome and substantial meal at the regular family hour, except one, who was with me when I opened the road to Santa Fe. When afterwards we were enabled to procure indifferent bear meat, we devoured it in that style of eagerness, which, on a review of our operations at this time, very forcibly reminds us of the table urbanity of a prairie wolf.

. . . I travelled from the Spanish village of Taos, to Fort Osage, on the Missouri, in thirty-four days. I had supplied myself with provisions for the journey consisting of meat, beans & peas. By the route which I travelled on my return, I avoided the so much dreaded sand hills, where adventurers have frequently been forced to drink the blood of their mules, to allay their thirst. . . .

I cannot better conclude than by annexing this remark, that the toils endured, and the privations suffered in these enterprizes, very naturally give a tone and relish to the repose and plenty found at the civilized fire side.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

The scrub, and the high grass along the creek, were swarming with white flanked wallabies, three of which Brown and Charley succeeded in shooting; and these, with a common grey kangaroo caught by Spring [one of the dogs], and five ducks shot by Brown, provided our larder with a fine supply of game.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1783: England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde:

Nancy and myself dined and spent part of the afternoon at Weston House with Mr. and Mrs. Custance. . . . [W]hilst we were at Dinner Mrs. Custance was obliged to go from Table about 4 o'clock labour Pains coming on fast upon her. We went home soon after dinner on the Occasion—as we came in the Coach. We had for Dinner some Beans and Bacon, a Chine of Mutton roasted, Giblett Pye, Hashed Goose, a Rabbit roasted and some young Peas,—Tarts, Pudding and Jellies. . . . Mrs. Custance . . . was brought to bed of a fine girl about 7 o'clock and as well as could be expected.

178: London, England

From the journal of James Boswell, the biographer of Samuel Johnson:

On Friday, June 25 I dined with (Johnson) at General Paoli's. . . . There was a variety of dishes much to his taste, of all which he seemed to me to eat so

much, that I was afraid he might be hurt by it; and I whispered to the General my fear, and begged he might not press him. “Alas !” (said the General) “see how very ill he looks; he can live but a very short time. Would you refuse any slight gratifications to a man under sentence of death?”

June 26

RECIPES FROM THE CRIMEA

1855: Crimean Peninsula, Crimean War

The flamboyant chef Alexis Soyer went to the Crimea to assist with the delivery of food to the soldiers there. His motive was part philanthropic, as it had been with his interventions in Ireland during the famine, but it was also an opportunity for him to showcase his own skills and inventions.

He wrote regularly to the editor of the *Times* during his time in Sebastopol, and on this day, his correspondence included seven recipes prepared from military rations, two of which are given below.

Sir,—I herewith beg to forward you some of the most important receipts which I have concocted out of the soldiers’ rations, and which are now adopted in various parts of the camp, and will no doubt shortly be extended to every regiment in the Crimea, having had them printed for circulation throughout the army. Some of the receipts were printed at headquarters and issued for distribution. The reason for my return to Scutari for a short time is to place a civilian cook who understands his business in each hospital, which cannot fail to be beneficial to the patients, and by a due organisation in those departments economy will in the end be effected.

I brought with me from headquarters 12 complete rations as given daily to the troops, and with these provisions I am now teaching ten of those very willing fellows who were originally engaged as cooks in the hospitals the plain way of camp cookery, and, instead of being almost useless, as they were, in so important a branch, they will now turn out, if not the bravest in the army, at least the most wonderful, being able to face both fire and battery when requisite.

With the highest consideration, I have the honour to be, Sir, your most obedient servant,

A. SOYER

Barrack Hospital, Scutari

(Receipt No. 1)

STEWED SALT BEEF AND PORK A LA OMAR PASHA

Put into a canteen saucepan about 2lb of well soaked beef, cut in eight pieces; $\frac{1}{2}$ lb of salt pork, divided in two, and also soaked; $\frac{1}{2}$ lb of rice, or six tablespoonsful; $\frac{1}{2}$ lb of onions, or four middle-sized ones, peeled and sliced; 2oz of brown sugar, or one large tablespoonful; $\frac{1}{4}$ oz of pepper, and five pints of water; simmer gently for three hours, remove the fat from the top and serve. The first time I made the above was in Sir John Campbell's soup kitchen, situated on the top of his rocky cavern, facing Sebastopol, near Cathcart's-hill, and among the distinguished pupils I had upon the occasion were Colonel Wyndham, Sir John Campbell, and Dr Hall, Inspector-General of the Army in the Crimea, and other officers. This dish was much approved at dinner, and is enough for six people, and if the receipt be closely followed you cannot fail to have an excellent food. The London salt meat will only require a four hours soaking, having been only lightly pickled.

(Receipt No. 7)

COSSACKS' PLUMPUDDING

Put into a basin 1lb of flour, $\frac{3}{4}$ lb of raisins (stoned, if time be allowed), $\frac{3}{4}$ lb of the fat of salt pork (well washed, cut into small dies, or chopped), two tablespoonsful of sugar or treacle; add a half pint of water; mix all together; put into a cloth tied tightly; boil for four hours, and serve. If time will not admit, boil only two hours, though four are preferable. How to spoil the above:—Add anything to it.

1863: USA, American Civil War

Major Frederick C. Winkle of the Union Army wrote home on this day:

[W]e have left the deserted fields of Virginia and come to a smiling, happy, thrifty land, to Maryland. . . . Of course, we suffered no want. We had an excellent dinner at a large farm house. . . . We had a good supper and breakfast and I feel ready to start again.

I think, if we have an engagement here or anywhere north, our soldiers will fight with great courage; it cannot be otherwise. The entire population, who treat them so kindly, will anxiously look on to shower upon them benedictions for victory, but scorn and indignation for defeat; the soft beams of sympathy which have smiled upon them has already brought a new spirit into the army. You should see them as they come from the village or a neighboring farm house, laden with bread and milk and pies.

The whole female population is baking, and they sell to the soldiers with pleasure at very moderate prices.

A RECIPE FOR BISCUIT

1847: USA

The *Scientific American* of this day gave a recipe for biscuit:

Receipt for Making Biscuit

One quart of milk, four even teaspoonfuls of cream of tartar, two even teaspoonfuls of carbonate of soda, the soda to be dissolved in the milk, and the cream of tartar to be thoroughly mixed dry with the flour, and a little salt. Mix it as soft as it can conveniently be baked. In this way you have biscuit mixed and ready for the table in half an hour.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1894: USA

Henry D. Perky and William H. Ford, of Watertown, New York, were granted Patent No. 521,810 for a “Machine for the Manufacture of Food Products from Cereals.” The patent would enable “production of a simple, efficient, and practical machine for the reduction of cereals into an edible wholesome and

practical machine for the reduction of cereals into an edible, wholesome and palatable food product in a convenient and desirable form.”

FOOD BUSINESS

1974: Ohio, USA

The first Universal Product Code (bar-code) scanner was used at a checkout at Marsh’s supermarket in Troy, Ohio. The first product scanned was a 67¢ packet of chewing gum.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1662: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys: “[T]ook Commissioner Pett home with me to dinner, where my stomach was turned when my sturgeon came to table, upon which I saw very many little worms creeping, which I suppose was through the staleness of the pickle.”

1818: England

John Keats, on a walking holiday in northern England and Scotland, wrote to his brother Thomas, who was at home and suffering from tuberculosis:

We set out from Endmoor this morning, breakfasted at Kendal with a soldier who had been in all the wars for the last seventeen years—then we have walked to Bowness to dinner (said Bowness situated on the lake where we have just dined), and I am writing this at present. I took an oar to one of the islands to take up some trout for dinner, which they keep in porous boxes. I enquired of the waiter for Wordsworth.

June 27

FOOD FIRSTS

1615

The first reference to tea by an Englishman occurs in a letter written on this day by East Indiaman R.L. Wickham, stationed in Japan, to his counterpart in Macao. "I pray you to buy for me a pot of the best *chaw*."

Chaw was the Englishman's interpretation of the Chinese *ch'a*. In a later account is mention of "three silver porringers to drink chaw in."

APHRODISIAC FOOD

1772: France

The Marquis de Sade and his friend Latour arrange a "rendezvous" with four "very young girls" on this day. The marquis gave the girls aniseed comfits laced with "Spanish Fly"—a powerful irritant derived from *Lytta vesicatoria*, or the "blister beetle." It was commonly believed to be an aphrodisiac, hence the infamous marquis's use of it. He tried the same technique a little later on another prostitute who became seriously ill, as a result of which de Sade was charged and sent to prison.

FOOD & WAR

1746: Scotland, the Jacobite Rebellion

Charles Edward Stuart, popularly known as Bonne Prince Charlie, was the Pretender to the thrones of England, Ireland, and Scotland, and in the name of his claim he led the Jacobite uprising of 1745. The rebellion failed however, when the Jacobites were defeated at the Battle of Culloden. Charles' escape into hiding after the battle, aided by his loyal supporters, has become the stuff of romantic legend.

The Prince famously left his hiding place in the Hebrides dressed as a maidservant in a "flowered linen gown, white apron & c," with the assistance of the young Flora McDonald. He received the news of the necessity for his escape the evening before, as he was cooking his own dinner.

During Miss MacDonal'd's stay at Clanranald's house, which was till the Friday, June 27th, O'Neil went several times betwixt the Prince and Miss, in which interval another scheme was proposed, that the Prince should go under the care of a gentleman to the northward: but that failing them they

under the care of a gentleman to the northward, but that failing them, they behoved to have recourse to that agreed upon before; and accordingly Lady Clanranald, one Mrs MacDonald, O'Neil, Miss Flora MacDonald, and her servant, Neil MacKechan, went to the place where the Prince was, being about eight Scotch miles. He was then in a very little house or hut, assisting in the roasting of his dinner, which consisted of the heart, liver, kidneys, &c. of a bullock or sheep, upon a wooden spit. O'Neil introduced his young preserver and the company, and she sat on the Prince's right hand, and Lady Clanranald on his left. Here they all dined very heartily.

—*Jacobite Memoirs of the Rebellion of 1745*

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1865: USA

Alexander C. Howell, of Vienna, New Jersey, was granted Patent No. 48,405 for an “Improved Beverage” that he called “Cream Soda-Water.” His patent specifications gave his recipe instructions.

Soda-water as commonly prepared in the shops, it as well known, requires costly and complicated machinery in its preparation, and therefore will, as an article of trade, only justify the erection of soda-fountains in cities and towns of considerable population. Families in the country and in small towns and villages are therefore generally, if not entirely, deprived of the use of this agreeable and healthy drink for the warm season of the year. Soda-powders are sold and used sometimes as a substitute for the more delicious drink of the fountain; but it is well known, also, that this is so inferior a representative of the pure article it is rarely resorted to, except as a medicine.

The object of my invention is to produce an article that can be prepared by and kept in every household, and from which soda-water of scarcely appreciable inferiority to that of the best fountain can be made at once and at any time, and in any quantity that may be required. To enable others skilled in the art to prepare this drink, I will proceed to state the materials used therefor, and the mode of using, them.

I take one ounce and a half of super-or bicarbonate of soda and dissolve it in one quart of hot water. When dissolved I add thereto three pounds of

white or loaf sugar, then take the whites of four eggs and one tablespoonful of wheat-flour, and beat them together and mix them well with the aforesaid compound of sugar, soda, and water. The composition thus formed may be flavored with any of the usual flavoring materials—such as oil of lemon, &c., extracts of vanilla, pine-apple, &c., to suit the taste.

When the soda-water is to be prepared for use, put into a tumbler or other suitable vessel a small quantity of tartaric, citric, or other suitable acid, adding so much water thereto as maybe necessary to dissolve this acid, if it be used in powder or a solid state. Then, first shaking the above-described composition, add so much thereof to the dissolved acid—Say, one or two tablespoonfuls to a common tumbler as will give the mixture when made the desired sweetness and flavor, and immediately add or fill up the tumbler or other vessel with cold or ice water.

I do not propose to confine myself to the exact proportions above described in making the drink, nor to the specific materials mentioned. For instance, honey could be substituted for white sugar, thus making an agreeable mead. In some cases vinegar or acetic acid might be used instead of citric or tartaric acids. Brown sugar might, for the sake of economy, be used for white, and the quantity of this and the other materials changed to suit the taste or pleasure of the drinkers; or certain quantities of wine or spirits' might be added, if desired.

Whether the cream soda water was Howell's original idea is not clear, but it appears that the basic concept had been around for at least two decades. *The American Agriculturist* of December 20, 1845, noted, "A recipe has been sold all over the country for making 'cream soda.'"

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769: Tahiti

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks:

"*Otahite*". . . We now prepared to set out for the other Kingdom. . . . But fertile as this country was we did no[t] get or even see a single breadfruit, the trees were intirely bared, the people seemd to live intirely on *Ahee*

Fagifera which were plentiful here. . . . We rowd till we came abreast a small Island calld *Tuarrite*. . . . [I]t was quite dark so that neither people nor victuals could I find except one house where I was furnishd with fire, a breadfruit and a half and a few *ahees*, with which and a duck or 2 and a few curlews we were forcd to go to sleep, which I did in the awning of a Canoe that followd us belonging to Tearee.

1770: Australia

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks:

“*Endeavours River*” Some of the Gentlemen who had been out in the woods Yesterday brought home the leaves of a plant which I took to be *Arum Esculentum*, the same I beleive as is calld Coccus in the West Indies. In consequence of this I went to the place and found plenty; on tryal however the roots were found to be too acrid to eat, the leaves however when boild were little inferior to spinage. In the same place grew plenty of Cabbage trees a kind of Wild Plantain whose fruit was so full of stones that it was scarce eatable, another fruit about as large as a small golden pippin but flatter, of a deep purple colour; these when gatherd off from the tree were very hard and disagreeable but after being kept a few days became soft and tasted much like indiferent Damsons.

1806: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day Meriwether Lewis wrote:

[F]rom this place we had an extensive view of these stupendous mountains principally covered with snow like that on which we stood; we were entirely surrounded by those mountains from which to one unacquainted with them it would have seemed impossible ever to have escaped; in short without the assistance of our guides I doubt much whether we who had once passed them could find our way to Travellers rest [the name of their campsite] in their present situation for the marked trees on which we had placed considerable reliance are much fewer and more difficult to find than we had apprehended. . . . [W]e encamped for the night having traveled 28 miles over these mountains without relieving the horses from their packs or their having any food. . . . [O]ur meat being exhausted we issued a pint of

bears oil to a mess which with their boiled roots made an agreeable dish.

1836: USA

From missionary Narcissa Whitman's journal of her journey in 1836 from New York, across the Rocky Mountains, to Oregon and beyond:

Platte River, South Side, Six Days above the Fort Laramie Frok, Near the Foot of the Rocky Mountains.

Dear Brother and Sister Whitman:

. . . On the way to the buffalo country we had to bake bread for ten persons. It was difficult at first, as we did not understand working out-doors; but we became accustomed to it, so that it became quite easy. June found us ready to receive our first taste of buffalo. Since that time I have had but little to do with cooking. Not one in our number relishes buffalo meat as well as my husband and I. He has a different way for cooking every piece of meat. I believe Mother Loomis would give up to him if she were here. We have had no bread since. We have meat and tea in the morn, and tea and meat at noon. All our variety consists of the different ways of cooking. I relish it well and it agrees with me. My health is excellent. So long as I have buffalo meat I do not wish anything else. Sister Spaulding is affected by it considerably—has been quite sick.

June 28

A MEAL FROM CANS

1937: England

The Stratford-on-Avon Produce Cannery's premises were the venue for a special meal on this day to celebrate an extension to the premises.

It was advertised by the company that "a full-course meal—from cocktails to wine and beer—can now be served from cans." The meal was planned to demonstrate that statement.

The bill of fare for the dinner was as follows: smoked salmon, caviare, sardines, anchovies in oil, herrings in oil, vegetable salad, tomato salad, olives, cream of asparagus, Julienne lobster, salmon, chicken in aspic, ox tongue, pressed beef, ham, brisket of beef and tongue, potatoes, fresh garden peas, carrots, spinach, English fruits in syrup, strawberries, loganberries, raspberries, plums, damsons, fruit in jelly, fruits salad, English canned cream, soft roes on toast, coffee, British canned beer.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1974: USA

A “Salad on a Stick” was patented on this day by Rodney E Russell. The patent specifications described the concept:

In the present invention the food items are pierced by and hence stacked upon a “stick” in “shish kebab” manner. The stick or hollow elongate member includes a preferably pointed end and also a reverse holding end which takes the form of a collapsible bulb. The latter is constructed to receive and store condiments such as sauces, salad oil, dressings, and the like. The bulb is adapted to be squeezed so as to urge the fluid upwardly through the upper end of the stick and allow the same to drip downwardly upon the food items contained thereon.

1960: USA

The earliest patent to mention polystyrene cups is Patent No. 2942301, issued on this day to Warren R. Price and Alexander S. Houston, assignors to Waxed Paper Company, for a “Method of Making a Receptacle of Foamed Polystyrene.” The patentees claimed that the receptacles would be competitive with paper cups, and could be held in the hand even when filled with boiling water.

IN THE NEWS

1882: Nevada, USA

The *Nevada State Journal* reported that “a few days ago a man caught a 16-

pound trout at Pyramid Lake. Inside the trout was a 4-pound sucker (*cui-ui*), and in the sucker was a half-pound chub. Singular to say, there was nothing inside the chub but worms.”

A CORONATION DINNER IN THE WORKHOUSE

1838: London, England

The poor in the workhouse were not left out of the festivities on the occasion of the coronation of Queen Victoria on this day. The chairman of the Board of Guardians of the workhouse at St. Martin-in-the-Fields made sure that the general public knew of the charitable increase in the normal meager ration for its inmates on this day by writing to the *Times*.

[T]he bill of fare provided for every inmate of our workhouse, upon the occasion of Her Majesty’s coronation—viz, six ounces of roast beef free from bone, half-pound of potatoes, three-quarters of a pound of plum pudding, and one pint of porter. I regret your reporter did not receive this information, but I suppose our porter had the fear of the Poor Law Commissioners before his eyes.

There had been a workhouse at St. Martin-in-the-Fields since 1725. By the 1770s it was one of the largest in the country, housing some seven hundred inmates. The 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act embodied the Victorian attitude to the poor, who were either “deserving,” or “undeserving”—the latter implying that they were too lazy to work. The prevailing approach in the workhouses was punitive. Most of the inmates were considered indolent, and there was also a belief that if the conditions in the workhouses were too comfortable, people would toss in their jobs and take advantage of the free room and board.

In the 1860s, the conditions in London workhouses, including St. Martin-in-the-Fields, were so appalling that they were the subject of a series of reports in *The Lancet*.

FOOD BUSINESS

1938: Pennsylvania, USA

To help Pennsylvania farmers dispose of an egg surplus, dispensing machines

To help Pennsylvania farmers dispose of an egg surplus, dispensing machines were installed in cafes and taverns throughout the state, which dispensed hard-boiled eggs at a nickel a piece.

THE POTATO

1715: Nancy, France

The court of Nancy issued a decree ordering a tithe on potato crops. The tithe was payable only after fifty years of cultivation, indicating that the potato was already well established by this time.

FOOD & WAR

1863: American Civil War, Siege of Vicksburg

On this day Lieutenant General John C. Pemberton received a letter signed simply “Many Soldiers.” It read, in part:

Our rations have been cut down to one biscuit and a small bit of bacon per day, not enough scarcely to keep soul and body together, much less to stand the hardships we are called upon to stand.

If you can't feed us, you had better surrender us, horrible as the idea is, than suffer this noble army to disgrace themselves by desertion. . . . Self-preservation is the first law of nature, and hunger will compel a man to do almost anything.

The army is now ripe for mutiny, unless it can be fed.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769: Tahiti

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks:

“*Otahite*” This morn at day break we rose and agreed to stay here an hour or two in hopes to get some provision: salt beef we had with us but nothing

of the bread kind, for that we depended on the natives who had on all former occasions been both able and willing to supply us with any quantity of Breadfruit. . . . [T]he cheif *Mathíabo* soon came down to us, he seemd a total stranger both to us and our trade. His subjects brought down plenty of Cocoa nuts and about 20 breadfruits, which latter we bought at a very dear rate, while his majesty sold us a pig for a glass bottle preferring that to any thing we could give him. We saw here an English goose and a turkey cock which they told us had been left by the Dolphin, both of them immensely fat and as tame as possible, following the Indians every where who seemd immensely fond of them.

1770: Australia

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks:

“*Endeavours River*” Tupia by Roasting his Cocos very much in his Oven made them lose intirely their acridity; the Roots were so small that we did not think them at all an object for the ship so resolvd to content ourselves with the greens which are calld in the West Indies Indian Kale. I went with the seamen to shew them the Place and they Gatherd a large quantity.

1817: Australia

From John Oxley’s journal of his expedition in 1817 to explore the course of the Lachlan River: “The lagoons abound with water fowl, although we were not so fortunate as to obtain any; we were however amply compensated by our dogs killing a fine large emu.”

1861: Australia

From the notes and journals of members of the ill-fated Burke and Wills expedition to cross Australia from south to north in 1860–1861. Wills wrote his last diary entry on this day; he is presumed to have died shortly afterward.

Mr Burke suffers greatly from the cold, and is getting extremely weak. He and King start tomorrow up the creek to look for the blacks; it is the only chance we have of being saved from starvation. I am weaker than ever, although I have a good appetite and relish the nardoo much; but it seems to give us no nutriment, and the birds here are so shy as not to be got at. Even

give us no nutriment, and the birds here are so shy as not to be got at. Even if we got a good supply of fish, I doubt whether we could do much work on them and the nardoo alone. Nothing now but the greatest good luck can save any of us; and as for myself, I may live four or five days if the weather continues warm. My pulse is at forty-eight, and very weak, and my legs and arms are nearly skin and bone. I can only look out, like Mr Micawber, “for something to turn up.” Starvation on nardoo is by no means very unpleasant, but for the weakness one feels, and the utter inability to move oneself; for as far as appetite is concerned, it gives me the greatest satisfaction. Certainly, fat and sugar would be more to one’s taste; in fact, those seem to me to be the great stand-by for one in this extraordinary continent; not that I mean to depreciate the farinaceous food, but the want of sugar and fat in all substances obtainable here is so great that they become almost valueless to us as articles of food, without the addition of something else.

(Signed) W J Wills

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1664: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

[T]hence with my uncle Wight to the Mum house; and there drinking, he doth complain of his wife most cruelly, as the most troublesome woman in the world and how she will have her will, saying she brought him a portion and God knows what. By which, with many instances more, I perceive they do live a sad life together.

1787: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde: “Sir Wm. Jernegan sent me by Mr Custance a Treatise on the Plant called Scarcity Root.”

The gift was undoubtedly *A treatise on the culture, use, and advantages, of the plant called scarcity-root* which had been published earlier that year by the abbé de Commerell, member of the Royal Society of Arts and Sciences at Metz. It was the first known description of a variety of yellow beet that was proving very

useful as a fodder crop in the Rhineland. Even at this early stage, the Abbé acknowledged its potential as a food for humans.

The leaves and the roots are said to be a wholesome food for man and cattle. The produce is large, as fresh leaves speedily supply the place of those which have been croot. Sixteen thousand some hundred plants, which were set in 2½ acres, Lorrain measure, supported (from the beginning of July to the 15th of November), with their leaves mixed with a third, and sometimes a fourth of other herbage, seven cows, and three calves; and from the 20th of November, the cows and calves were fed with the cut roots, mixed with a small portion of chopt hay, or straw, during the winter.

The names of the plant are interesting. Originally it was “mangold wurzel” which means “root of the beet,” but folk etymology came into play, and the name became adapted to “mangel wurzel” which means “scarcity root.” This happened because the advantages of the root in such times were immediately obvious as the plant was able “to constantly thrive, and to produce a very great crop, even when other kinds of roots and vegetables fail, and when there is a general scarcity of forage.” The same features made it a useful scarcity root for humans too, and one writer even suggested it might also “furnish an agreeable variety to the tables of the opulent.” It is not only the root which is useful. The leaves of the mangel-wurzel were said by some enthusiasts to “exceed spinach,” and the stems and stalks of the larger leaves to “eat like asparagus.”

June 29

A FINE AUSTRALIAN COLONIAL DINNER

1846: Australia

Adjutant General Mundy described dinner at the home of Sir Maurice O’Connell, the lieutenant-governor of the colony of New South Wales.

I dined this day, 29th June, with my respected chief Sir Maurice O’Connell, at his beautiful villa, Tarmons. . . . [T]here were brisk coal fires burning in both dining and living room and . . . the general appliances of the household, the dress of the guests and servants were entirely as they could have been in London. The family likeness of an Australian and Old Country

dinner party became less striking when I found myself sipping doubtfully, then swallowing with relish, a plate of wallaby[sic] tail soup, followed by a slice of boiled schnapper with oyster sauce. A roast of kangaroo venison helped to convince me . . . a delicate wing of the wonga-wonga pigeon and sauce, with a dessert of plantains and loquats, guavas and some oranges, pomegranates and cherimoyas landed my decision at length firmly in the Antipodes.

PRISON FOOD

1934: Texas, USA

The menu for breakfast, dinner, and supper for the Dallas County Jail on this day was typed on a sheet of paper bearing a small promotional advertisement for Kellogg's Corn Flakes.

BREAKFAST

Bacon Syrup

Bread

Coffee Cream

Sugar

NOON

Veal Stew

Onions

Irish Potatoes

SUPPER

Chilie Beans

Stewed Peaches

2 1

Bread

Ice Tea

FOOD CERTIFICATION

1936: France

Champagne received *Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée* certification. This certification is similar to the European Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) status in that it is based on the concept of *terroir*. “Terroir” is an embodiment of the interactions between the environmental features of a specific location and the genetic makeup of a specific animal or plant that impart its unique flavor and character.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks:

As soon as the boat returned we got our breakfast and set out. The first district on which we landed was the last in Tiarreboo, it was governed by Omoe. He was employed in building a house for which purpose he wanted a hatchet very much and was inclined to offer any price for it but our stock was quite spent; after some conversation we found that he would not deal for nails and put off the boat. He and his wife Whannoouda followed in a canoe; we took them into the boat and after rowing about a league they desired we would put ashore, which we did and found his people who had brought a very large hog. We had much chaffering about the price of it, it was worth any ax we had in the ship but we had no ax at all in the boat. We therefore told Omoe that if he would come to Matavie with his hog he should have a large ax and a nail into the bargain for his trouble; which he after having consulted his wife readily agreed to, and gave us a large piece of cloth as a pledge of his intention to perform this agreement.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1800: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde: “Dinner to day, a Sculphling of Lamb roasted (viz.) a Breast and Neck joined together.”

It is fortunate that Woodforde’s description of his dinner includes a definition of this inexpensive cut of lamb, for there are no other references to *sculphling* in any other sources. The fact that he clarified the term in his own personal diary suggests that it must have been something of a curiosity to him. Perhaps it represents a now obsolete dialect term from Norfolk. Animal carcasses were cut in different ways in different regions at the time too, so it is possible that this was a local style of cut.

1856: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau:

A man by the riverside told us that he had two young ducks which he let out to seek their food along the riverside at low tide that morning. At length he noticed that one remained stationary amid the grass or salt weeds and something prevented its following the other. He went to its rescue and found its foot shut tightly in a quahog’s shell amid the grass which the tide had left. He took up all together, carried to his house, and his wife opened the shell with a knife, released the duck, and cooked the quahog.

June 30

Venison Day

This day in the Christian Church calendar is the Feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul, and in the vicinity of St. Paul’s Cathedral in London it used to be traditional to eat venison with port wine sauce. The meal is said to commemorate the gift, in the year 1274, of twenty-two acres of land to Sir William Baud of Essex, by the dean and Chapter of St. Paul’s.

“In consideration” of this gift, Sir William undertook that

he would for ever upon the feast-day of the Conversion of Paul [January 25] in winter, give unto them a good doe, seasonable and sweete; and upon

20], in winter, give unto them a good doe, seasonable and sweete, and upon the feast of the Commemoration of St. Paul [June 30], in summer, a good bucke; and offer the same at the high altar, the same to be spent among the canons residents; the doe to be brought by one man at the houre of procession; and thorow the procession to the high altar, and the bringer to have nothing: the bucke to be brought by all his meyney in like manner, and they to have paid unto them, by the chamberlaine of the church, twelve pence only, and no more to be required.

This grant be made; and for performance bound the lands of him and his heires to be distrained on: and if the lands should be evicted (resumed by a court of judicature) that yet he and his heires should accomplish the gift.

On June 30, the donated buck was carried up the steps of the cathedral and was blessed at the high altar, after which “they sent the body of the bucke to baking.”

The tradition may have very ancient roots. St. Paul’s Cathedral is believed to be built at or near the location of an ancient temple to the Diana, the Roman goddess of the hunt, to whom animals such as the ox and deer were sacrificed. It is said that remnants of these sacrificial animals were discovered when the foundations for the first (of three) cathedrals on this site were laid in the early seventh century.

FOOD & THE LAW

1906: USA

Congress passed the Food and Drug Act and the Federal Meat Inspection Act, to be in force as of January 1, 1907.

The Food and Drug Act was intended to prevent “the manufacture, sale, or transportation of adulterated or misbranded or poisonous or deleterious foods, drugs, medicines, and liquors, and for regulating traffic therein, and for other purposes.” Food was declared adulterated, or unfit for consumption if

it is mixed or packed with another substance so as to reduce or lower or injuriously affect its quality and strength if any substance has been substituted wholly or in part; if any valuable constituent has been wholly or in part abstracted, if it has been colored, powdered, coated, or stained to conceal damage or inferiority; if poisonous or deleterious substances have

been added; if it consists wholly or in part of filthy, putrid, or decomposed animal or vegetable substance, or any portion of an animal unfit for food; or if the product is from a diseased animal or one that died otherwise than by slaughter.

FOOD CERTIFICATION

2009: England

The famous Melton Mowbray Pie of Leicestershire was granted Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) status.

The dough for this type of pie is different from shortcrust or puff pastry in that it is made with hot water, which results in a malleable dough which can be “raised” to form a free-standing pie shell reminiscent of a medieval “coffin.” The pie is filled with pork, and eaten cold.

Gervase Markham (ca. 1568–February 3, 1637) published his book, *The English Huswife*, in 1615. In it he emphasized the importance of understanding which type of pastry was suitable for each purpose.

Next to these already rehearsed, our English Housewi[f]e must be skilful in Pastry, and know how and in what manner to baked all sorts of meat, and what Paste is fit for every meat, and how to handle and compound such Pastes. As for example, Red Deer, Venison, Wild Boar, Gammons of Bacon, Swans, Elkes, Porpus and suchlike standing dishes, which must be kept long, would be bak't in a moyst, thick, tough, course, and long lasting crust, and therefore of all other, your Rye paste is best for that purpose; your Turkey, Capon, Pheasant, Partridge, Veal, Peacocks, Lamb, and all sorts of WaterFowl, which are to come to the Table more than once, (yet not many dayes) would be bak't in a good white-crust, somewhat thick: therefore your Wheat is fit for them; your Chickens, Calves-feet, Olives, Potatoes, Quinces, Fallow Deer, and such like which are most commonly eaten hot, would be in the finest, shortest, and thinnest crust, therefore your fine Wheat-flower, which is a little baked in the Oven before it be kneaded is the best for that purpose.

To speak then of the mixture and kneading of Pastes, you shall understand, that your Rye-paste would be kneaded onely with hot water, and a little

Butter, or sweet Seam, and Rye-flower very finely sifted; and it would be made tough and stiffe, that it may stand well in the rising, for the Coffin thereof must ever be very deep; your course Wheat-crust should be kneaded with hot water, or Mutton broth, and good store of Butter, and the paste made stiffe and tough, because that Coffin mull be deep also: your fine Wheat crust must be kneaded with as much butter as water, and the paste made reasonable light and gentle, into which you must put three or four eggs or more, according to the quantity you blend together, for they will give it a sufficient stiffening.

Of Puffe pasts. Now for the making of puff-paste of the best kind, you shall take the finest Wheat flower after it hath been a little bak't [dried] in a pot in the Oven, and blend it well with eggs, whites and yelks all together, and after the paste is well kneaded, roul out a part thereof as thin as you please, and then spread cold sweet butter over the same; then upon the same butter roul another lets of the paste as before, and spread it with butter also; and thus roul leaf upon leaf with butter between, till it be as thick as you think good: and with it either cover any bak't meat, or make paste for Venison, Florentine, Tart, or what dish else you please, and so bake it. There be some that to this paste use Sugar, but it is certain, it will hinder the rising thereof, and therefore, when your puff-paste is bak't, you shall dissolve Sugar into Rose-Water, and drop it into the paste as much as it will by any means, receive, and then set it a little while in the Oven after, and it will be sweet enough.

FOOD BUSINESS

1849: England

The *Illustrated London News* carried the following advertisement on this day:

SCHWEPPE'S SODA POTASS and MAGNESIA water and AERATED LEMONADE continue to be manufactured as usual upon the largest scale at their several establishments in London, Bristol, and Laseby. None is genuine without a label with the name of their firm. German and Brighton Seltser Water constantly fresh—51 Elener's Street.

FOOD & WAR

1941: Britain, World War II

The Ministry of Food announce that price control of fish would begin on this day. The Ministry's *Food Facts* leaflet number 48 advised:

Fish is in short supply. Fish will remain in short supply. No amount of price control and no amount of distribution control can alter that.

BUT the Ministry of Food has controlled from *June 30* the price of what fish is available. This control reduces the price drastically, but in such a way that the fishermen themselves will receive a *larger share* of the lowered price. Auctions at the ports—where the longest purse has determined the price—will in general be abolished. The Fish Trade has itself agreed to appoint Allocation Committees which will distribute as evenly and as fairly as possible over the whole Country. To give distant places as good a chance as those near the ports, the Ministry has arranged to pay carriage from ports of landing, regardless of distance.

But remember—*control won't bring more fish out of the sea!*

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1806: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day William Clark wrote: “Decended the mountain to Travellers rest leaveing these tremendous mountains behind us, in passing of which we have experienced cold and hunger of which I shall ever remember . . . our food was horses of which we eate three.”

1838: USA

Mrs. Sarah Smith, wife of missionary Reverend Asa Bowen Smith, crossed the country in 1838 with Narcissa Whitman and her husband. Sarah writes about making meat pies along the trail and how she improvised to make up for the lack of a rolling pin and breadboard. The group Sarah was traveling with brought a reflector oven, which made baking much easier. On June 30, 1838, she wrote:

Spent this morning sewing a hunter's dress & this afternoon made a couple

From the morning cooking a number of pies on the afternoon made a couple of pies, chopped meat with a butcher knife on the back of a cottonwood tree which Mr. S peeled off. Rolled the crust with a crooked stick in a hollow bark, baked them in the tin baker out of doors in the wind but they were good and we have had a good supper.

1840: Australia

From the journal of Edward John Eyre (1815–1901) on an expedition into the inland of the continent:

Our road to day was much better, and less interrupted by gullies, though we still kept close under Flinders range. . . . Late in the afternoon we reached a watercourse, which I had previously named “Myall Ponds,” There I knew we could get water, and at once halted the party for the night. . . . My young friend, Mr. Scott, was kept equally busy; for in many of these duties he assisted me, . . . independently of which he was the only sportsman in the party, and upon his gun we were dependant for supplies of wallabies, pigeons, ducks, or other game, to vary our bill of fare, and make the few sheep we had with us hold out as long as possible. . . . At our present encampment, several of a species of wallabie, very much resembling a hare in flavour, were shot by Mr. Scott, but hitherto we had not succeeded in getting a kangaroo.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1668: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys: “Up and at the office all the morning. Then home to dinner, where a stinking leg of mutton—the weather being very wet and hot to keep meat in.”

July

July 1

THE MANATEE

1870: Britain

The *Food Journal* this year ran a series of articles on African food. The subject in the issue released on this day was the manatee.

The manatee, although partially, if not mainly, an inhabitant of the ocean, is truly a pachydermatous animal.

We believe that the African manatee (*Af. Senegalensis*) is to be met with at intervals at the mouths of the rivers all the way round from Senegal to Mosambique. . . . Indeed, the manatee seems nowhere to have been common; . . . It is a royal perquisite, like the sturgeon in Britain, and is generally taken to the chief's table; but none of my missionary friends seem to have tasted it. Dr. Vogel, however, speaks of it as very good, its flesh and fat being like pork, and very well flavoured. There is no reason why it should not be so. It is herbivorous, feeding on sea weeds when in the sea, and on grass, etc., when in the rivers or marshes. It reaches 10 ft. in length, and becomes very fat. We know, too, that its near relative, the now extinct *Rhytina Stelleri* [the Northern Sea Cow] during the short period which elapsed between man's discovery of it, and his eating it off the face of the earth (it was discovered in 1741, and the last survivor was consumed in 1768), supplied a large store of what is described as most excellent food to the whalers who annually wintered at Bearing's Island, where they congregated in numbers for the purpose of economising their stores, and feeding on the fresh supplies which that animal afforded. A similar fate probably awaits the manatee, although its wider distribution no doubt gives it a longer day.

U.S. STATE FOOD

2006: Florida

The Florida legislature formally adopted the Key Lime Pie as the official state pie on this day.

The first recipe for key lime pie was recorded in the 1930s. Key lime pie is made with canned sweetened condensed milk, since fresh milk was not a common commodity in the Florida Keys before modern refrigerated distribution methods.

FOOD PRESERVATION

1763: Britain

The second British patent issued for a method of food preservation (No. 793) was to Alexander Cockburn of Berwick upon Tweed, fishmonger and “curer of salmon for the London market” for “[a] new composition and peculiar method of curing salmon with spices, which may be sent even to the East Indies.”

The method involved boiling the fish for a given time in water to which cloves, mace, common pepper, vinegar, and salt were added.

FOOD FIRSTS

1910: Chicago

The Ward Baking Company opened the first completely automatic bread plant in the United States.

An article in (of all things) *Baseball Magazine* of July 1915 explained the workings of the Ward Baking Company’s plant:

It takes a thousand pounds of yeast to supply this plant for a single day, and no less than twenty-five barrels a week of condensed milk, weighing six hundred and twenty-five pounds a barrel. Then there is vegetable oil used in greasing the bread pans, and sugar which is purchased by the car load. Flour is too bulky for this valuable floor space. It is unloaded from the original freight can at a special siding in the sub-basement. Stored in two-bushel sacks, it rises tier on tier to the very ceiling, literally thousands of tons of it. A steady river of the powdery dust flows through pipes to the

tons of it. . . . A steady river of the powdery dust flows through pipes to the floor beneath, and it is amazing the amount of refuse which this whirring mechanism extracts from even the purest of flour. . . . These tanks are filled automatically and when they have received their proper amount they are automatically closed. To these tanks is added a proper amount of distilled water, the yeast and sugar, and the whole mixture allowed to stand for a time in gigantic troughs.

When this mixture is “ripe,” in the bread language, it is shot through openings in the floor to mixers beneath, where it is kneaded by machinery. . . . A single attendant propels the gigantic loaf on its aerial railway, and, touching a spring, releases the bottom, the whole mass falling through the opening to the floor beneath. Here eager machinery seizes the huge lump of dough. It fairly tears the groaning mass to pieces, slicing it up with the precision of clock work into individual loaves of the proper weight. . . . One after another, automatically, the loaves fall from their moving platform, each into its respective pan on the moving platform beneath, and travel at the same slow pace to the fiery mouth of the oven. . . . It takes about twenty minutes to complete the journey. When they have reached the farther end they are done, crisp, well browned, glistening loaves of bread. . . . This intricate mass of wheels and rods and glittering steel fixtures seizes the loaves as they approach, whirls them rapidly through a maze of evolutions, from which they emerge properly clothed, sober, sedate, each wrapped in a covering of waxed paper, stamped and sealed. Thence, safe from contact, literally baked from start to finish untouched by the human hand, they are borne away in gigantic crates to a neighboring platform, where a long row of waiting trucks are to bear them to the customers. One hundred and thirty-five of these automobile trucks leave this one establishment twice daily. It is a marvelous system, an education in itself, to see this great plant turning out its representative quota of the Ward product! One hundred and seventy-two loaves per minute is the record of the great oven.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

1552: London, England

A man and woman in Cheapside were placed in the pillory for selling underweight pots of strawberries. “The furst of July ther was a man and a woman on the pelere [pillory] in Chepe-syd [Cheapside]; the man sold potts of

straberries, the wnyche the pott was not allt rule, but ryled with torne [tern].”

FOOD & THE LAW

1793: London

A London newspaper reported a breach of customs on this day. At that time, customs officers were granted some of the seized goods, if the seizure was determined to be legal.

Yesterday [i.e., July 1] a Quantity of Butter which was seized by the Customhouse Officers a few Days ago in a Warehouse in this City, as Irish Grease-Butter, Imported contrary to Law, was inspected before the Right Hon. the Lord Mayor and Sir Matthew Blackiston; when upwards of a hundred Firkins were found to be good Butter, and accordingly condemned as a legal Seizure. Half of it is forfeited to the Poor of the Parish where it was seized, and the other Half to the Officers who seized it. Upwards of sixty Firkins in the Borough, which were landed out of the same Ship, are also seized and condemned.

FOOD CERTIFICATION

1996: Nuremburg, Germany

Lebkuchen, a form of gingerbread that is a specialty of the city, was granted Protected Geographical Indication (PGI) status by the European Economic Union.

Nuremburg has been famous for its gingerbread for centuries. A traveler to the city in 1882 was very enthusiastic about the delights of this spicy, but not necessarily obviously gingery, treat. *Gingerbread* was synonymous with *spice bread* in previous times (it was called *pain d’epices*) but the writer who made the complaint clearly did not know this.

At this present time the branches of industrial activity in which it principally excels are the manufacture of toys, hardware, papier-mâché, terra-cotta, wood and ivory carving, and—shall I dare add ?—gingerbread. But this specialty of Nuremberg has an importance which forbids that it should be ignored. It is formed in long, square, round, and fancy-shaped

cakes; but to call that wonderful production gingerbread no one would venture to do, without a particular introduction. The compound is excellent, as I can advisedly assert, having tasted and tested. Its composition is mysterious, but various familiar ingredients are evolved as one cautiously investigates. I think that without doubt the first discovery made by a new acquaintance would be that it was exceedingly difficult to break, bite, or cut. When one has managed to secure a fragment, his surprise at that success is augmented by a series of discoveries, each more marvellous than the preceding. There is a bit of citron, a raisin, the hint of a flavor, an almond, suggestions of known qualities mingled with much not recognizable, when, like an oasis in a desert, a toothsome jelly is reached; in brief, Nuremberg gingerbread is an uncertain compound, rich, highly flavored, and spicy, but without a suggestion of ginger.

—*Aftermath: from city and country, berg and thal . . .* (1882) B. M. Buckhout

FOOD & WAR

1940: Britain, World War II

From the wartime diary of housewife Nella Last:

At times when I see such silly waste in shop windows, I think it's a pity there are no women in the War Cabinet. It's taken the powers that be all this time to see the shocking waste of sugar in confectioner's shops, and to realise it would be better to let people have sugar for jam.

EXPLORERS & FOOD

1862: Africa

John Hanning Speke, from his *Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile*.

The queene, squatting within her hut, now ordered both Grant and myself to sit outside and receive a present of five eggs and one cock each, saying coaxingly, "These are for my children."

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1665: London, England

From the diary of John Evelyn:

[D]owne to the fleete, with my Lord Sandwich now Admiral, . . . here we dined with many noble men, Gent: and Volunteeres; served in Plate, and excellent meate of all sorts: after dinner came his Majestie & the Duke & Prince Rupert: & here I saw him knight Cap. Cuttance.

1787: France

Thomas Jefferson wrote to John Adams on this day about the cultivation of rice in Europe.

I had expected to satisfy myself at Marseilles of the causes of the difference of quality between the rice of Carolina and that of Piedmont which is brought in quantities to Marseilles. Not being able to do it, I made an excursion of three weeks into the rice country beyond the Alps, going through it from Vercelli to Pavia about 60 miles. I found the difference to be, not in the management as had been supposed both here and in Carolina, but in the species of rice, and I hope to enable them in Carolina to begin the Cultivation of the Piedmont rice and carry it on hand in hand with their own that they may supply both qualities, which is absolutely necessary at this market. I had before endeavored to lead the depot of rice from Cowes to Honfleur and hope to get it received there on such terms as may draw that branch of commerce from England to this country. It is an object of 250,000 guineas a year.

1843: USA

From the American journals of Nathaniel Hawthorne: “We had our first dish of green peas (a very small one) yesterday. Every day for the last week has been tremendously hot; and our garden flourishes like Eden itself.”

1912: USA

Future president Harry Truman wrote to his sweetheart and future wife, Bess Wallace, on this day:

Grandview, Mo.

. . . I don't believe I even thanked you or your mother for the fine dinner you gave me, and I know I didn't thank Agnes for her pie. She ought to know it was very much appreciated though because two pieces disappeared in my direction; and you know I always enjoy dinner at your house.

July 2

DINING WITH LORD MOUNTBATTEN

1948: London, England

Lord Mountbatten of Burma dined with some of his military comrades at the famous restaurant Simpson's-in-the-Strand on this day. The occasion was the Second Annual Reunion Dinner of the 17th Indian Division. The menu was modest, in keeping with the post-war situation of ongoing austerity and rationing.

MENU

Hors d'Oeuvres

Roast Wing of Chicken and Chipolata

Bread Sauce

Fresh Garden Peas New Potatoes

Ice Cream and Fruit Salad

Coffee

Simpson's-in-the-Strand opened in the Savoy building in 1828 as "The Grand Cigar Divan," a chess club, coffee house, and restaurant. The restaurant maintains a strong tradition of serving British dishes made with British

ingredients, and refuses to use the French term *menu*, instead listing its offerings in a “bill of fare.”

FOOD & WAR

1914: Germany, World War I

Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany met with the Austrian ambassador on this day. Over a simple lunch of poached eggs and champagne he pledged Germany’s support for Austria’s intention to retaliate over the assassination at Sarajevo by attacking Serbia. He did this in the full knowledge of the risks it would involve to his subjects, and that it would seriously displease Tsar Nicholas of Russia (his cousin) and King George of England. He then went off on a holiday and was uncontactable during the frenetic diplomatic negotiations that ensued.

FOOD IN FLIGHT

1937

Amelia Earhart was on her second attempt at a round-the-world flight in a specially fitted-out Lockheed Electra 10E. She had set off on May 21, and on July 2 had taken off at midnight from Lae in Papua New Guinea en route to Howland Island. It was the 28th leg of the flight. At 8:43 a.m. (the exact time is disputed) the last broadcast was received from Earhart. She apparently indicated that they had only half an hour fuel left and there was no land in sight. She was not heard from again, and her fate and that of her navigator Fred Noonan are still a mystery.

In an interview given while the search was still underway, Mr. Putnam (Earhart’s husband) reminded Mrs. Noonan (the wife of navigator Fred Noonan) that the pair had “plenty of food and water—tomato juice and concentrated food tablets—to keep them alive for weeks.”

NEWFOUNDLAND COD

1992: Canada

Cod fishing in Newfoundland was ceased for a two-year period (which was later

extended). The decision, motivated by dwindling stocks of fish, which it was hoped would have the opportunity to recover, had an immediate and devastating impact on more than nineteen thousand fishermen and plant workers.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1862: Africa

John Hanning Speke, from his *Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile*:

Three goats were stolen, and suspicion falling on the king's cooks, who are expert foragers, we sent to the Kamraviona, and asked him to order out the Mganga; but his only reply was, that he often loses goats in the same way. He sent us one of his own for present purposes, and gave thirty baskets of potatoes to my men.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1661: London, England

John Evelyn, in his memoir, wrote that on this day he “went to see the New Spring Garden at Lambeth, a pretty contriv'd plantation.”

The New Spring Gardens were renamed Vauxhall Gardens in 1785. The gardens became a popular place of public entertainment in London from this time until its eventual closure in July 1859.

Food and beverages could be purchased once inside the gardens, but they were certainly not the major attraction. Contemporary jokes abounded in relation to the quality of both. It was said, for example, that an expert Vauxhall waiter could cover the entire garden (about eleven acres) with slices from one ham. Making the same point, Vauxhall ham was also known as “sliced cobwebs,” and Vauxhall beef as “book muslin, pickled and boiled.”

Another wit, writing for *Bailey's Magazine of Sports* in 1860, said,

Be that as it may, I must in candour state my own impression on the subject. which is. that you would see the worse if you placed a Vauxhall

... sandwich in one eye, and wet the other with Vauxhall punch, although at the same time, in raising either one or the other to your lips, you were not likely to be open to the remark that you were lifting weights beyond your strength.

Vauxhall punch was made from arrack, which was “a name applied in Eastern countries to any spirituous liquor of native manufacture; especially, that distilled from the fermented sap of the coco-palm, or from rice and sugar, fermented with the coco-nut juice” (*Oxford English Dictionary*). Dr. William Kitchiner in *The Cook’s Oracle* (1817) rather mockingly implied that the Vauxhall beverage was a fraud in his recipe for mock arrack.

Mock Arrack

Dissolve two scruples of *flowers of Benjamin* in a quart of good rum, and it will immediately impart to it the inviting fragrance of “Vauxhall nectar.”

1664: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys. He was in charge at this time of victualing for the navy.

At noon to the Change; and there (which is strange) I could meet with nobody that I could invite home to my venison pasty, but only Mr. Alsop and Mr. Lanyon, whom I invited last night, and a friend they brought along with them. So home, and with our venison pasty we had other good meat and good discourse. After dinner sat close to discourse about our business of the victualling of the garrison at Tanger.

1818: Scotland

John Keats, on a walking holiday in Scotland, wrote to his sister Fanny on this day.

[B]eing tired after my days walking. . . . Then I get so hungry a Ham goes but a very little way and fowls are like Larks to me—A batch of Bread I make no more ado with than a sheet of Parliament; and I can eat a Bull’s head as easily as I used to do Bull’s eyes—I take a whole string of Pork sausages down as easily as a Pen’orth of Lady’s fingers—Oh dear I must

soon be contented with an acre or two of oaten cake a hogshead of Milk and a Cloaths basket of eggs morning noon and night when I get among the Highlanders.

Parliament was a type of gingerbread made in thin flat sheets.

Lady fingers were a type of biscuit.

1850: Australia

Andrew James Pollock, a migrant aboard the *Trafalgar*, which arrived in Adelaide on this day, wrote home to his family, who were to follow him:

Dinner consists of mutton killed on board, or preserved meat, soup, sea pie, or fowls, and potatoes, with a pudding of raisins and almonds. On Sunday the soup is replaced by pickled salmon. The salmon is most excellent and so is the soup invariably, also the preserved provisions. I own that I can't get over my disgust at the mutton and pork killed on board, though as good as can be, and the fowls (ducks and elderly hens) are frightfully scraggy.

1874: At Sea

From the diary of James Anderson McLauchlan, a Scot aged twenty-one years, en route to Australia aboard the *City of Adelaide*.

[T]he hard biscuit and salt meat was a great change to us, but time works wonders . . . we get that preserved meat twice a week which is a nice change besides pea soup the one day, and rice the other. . . . [W]e don't like the preserved potatoes . . . we sometimes get porridge and molasses. . . . [W]e also get a loaf for the mess twice a week.

July 3

AN ARTIST'S DINNER

1907: New York

The artist and author Herman Lee Meader gave a “freak dinner” to fellow artists on this day. The *New York Times* reported on the event the next day.

Artists at Freak Dinner

Herman Lee Meader, artist and author . . . gave a freak dinner last night there [his apartments at 102 East Twenty-sixth Street] to six of the eight artists who kindly contributed drawings to illustrate his last book, and to six or seven other artists who are just his friends.

The dinner began late, but advance copies of “instructions sent to the caterer” which were kindly furnished to the newspapers gave, among others, these details of the me[al]: Mashed vegetables on palettes, sauterne in mineral water bottles, cups that held a material covered with rich mushroom gravy, the “material” being rubber nipples, dolls’ shoes, collar buttons, and other odds and ends; huge firecrackers that concealed pints of claret; two watermelons, in which were quarts of champagne; lettuce, covering live crabs, lobsters, and chickens; a live chameleon pinned to each lettuce leaf; a few real articles of food; small pots of growing roses, the supposed earth in the pots being chocolate ice; cigars at the end of toy balloons, and coffee in candlesticks.

The menus were written on the fly leaves of copies of the host’s latest book. These served as the souvenirs. The book is a small volume of epigrams.

FOOD & WAR

1863: American Civil War

A young woman called Rachel Cormany wrote of the day-to-day routine of obtaining food during the Gettysburg campaign.

Started out with Cora & a little basket on the hunt for something to eat out of the garden. I am tired of bread & molasses—went to Mammy Royers & got some peas & new potatoes—Cora got as many raspberries as she could eat. Came home put Cora to sleep then went to Mrs McG’s for milk. [G]ot a few cherries to eat also a few for Cora when I got back.

1918: France, World War I

From the war diary of American serviceman Clarence Richmond:

July 3rd . . . a detail of three men from each platoon was sent to Paris to participate in the celebration of July 4th . . . the Red Cross gave us some canned peaches and pears during the day. These had been brought up with the rations. There was only a bite a piece but that bite surely tasted delicious. The French issue of canned meat was put up in Argentina, and we called it “Monkey Meat.” This was the only canned meat we had for a long time. A person had to be hungry to eat it.

1954: Britain, Post–World War II

Fourteen years of rationing ended at midnight (*see January 8*) when the remaining restrictions (on the sale and purchase of meat and bacon) were removed. The entire country celebrated. Members of the London Housewives’ Association held a special ceremony in London’s Trafalgar Square to mark the day, and the minister of fuel and power, Geoffrey Lloyd, publicly burned a large replica of a ration book at a meeting in his constituency.

RECIPE OF THE DAY

1856: USA

Ahead of the Independence Day celebrations, a Washington newspaper gave the following recipe suggestion:

How to Eat Strawberries

Place as many berries as will form one layer at the bottom of a dish, and sift some fine loaf sugar over them; then place another layer, and sift again. When there are five or six layers, cut a fresh lemon and squeeze all over them. Before helping, let them be gently disturbed, that they may have the benefit of the lemon juice and sugar. —*Evening Star*, July 3, 1856

ANNIVERSARY

1908: Albion, Michigan

This was the birthday of American writer Mary Frances Kennedy Fisher. Fisher is one of the most admired food writers in the world. She wrote twenty-seven books, which are a marvellous blend of literature, travelogue, and memoir liberally sprinkled with notes and ideas and comments on food, and also translated Brillat-Savarin's classic book *Physiologie du Goût*, first published in 1825.

What is special about Fisher is not the tedious stuff about six teaspoons of dry mustard, but the literary dressing around the sides of the recipes.

—Philip Howard, in the *London Observer*, November 29, 1981

EXPLORERS & FOOD

1769: Tahiti

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks:

“*Otahite*” . . . We had often wonderd from whence the small supplys of breadfruit we had came, as there was none to be seen upon the flats, but they soon explaind the mystery, shewing us breadfruit trees planted on the sides of the hills and telling us at the same time that when the fruit in the flats faild this became ready for use, which had been by them planted upon the hills to preserve the succession. The quantity was they informd us much less than was in the low land and not sufficient by any means to supply all the interval of scarcity; when this was exhausted they must live upon *ahee* nuts, Plantains, and *Vae*, a wild plantain which grows very high up in the mountains.

1770: Australia

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks: “‘*Endeavours River*’ . . . He had in his return landed on a dry reef where he found vast plenty of shell fish so that the Boat was compleatly loaded, cheifly with a large kind of Cockles (*Chama Gigas*) One of which was more than 2 men could eat.”

1754: England

From Henry Fielding's *The Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon*. They are becalmed in the harbor, awaiting a change in the weather.

Now, though the captain had well victualled his ship with all manner of salt provisions for the voyage, and had added great quantities of fresh stores, particularly of vegetables, at Gravesend, such as beans and peas, which had been on board only two days, and had possibly not been gathered above two more, I apprehended I could provide better for myself at Deal than the ship's ordinary seemed to promise. I accordingly sent for fresh provisions of all kinds from the shore, in order to put off the evil day of starving as long as possible. My man returned with most of the articles I sent for, and I now thought myself in a condition of living a week on my own provisions. I therefore ordered my own dinner, which I wanted nothing but a cook to dress and a proper fire to dress it at; but those were not to be had, nor indeed any addition to my roast mutton, except the pleasure of the captain's company, with that of the other passengers; for my wife continued the whole day in a state of dozing, and my other females, whose sickness did not abate by the rolling of the ship at anchor, seemed more inclined to empty their stomachs than to fill them.

1796: Africa

Mungo Park (1771–1806) was a Scottish explorer who made several expeditions into Africa. In mid-March of 1796 in Ludamar he was taken prisoner by a local Moorish chieftain. On July 1, he managed to escape. His journal entry on July 3 reads,

Turning from this inhospitable door, I rode slowly out of the town, and, perceiving some low, scattered huts without the walls, I directed my route towards them, knowing that in Africa, as well as in Europe, hospitality does not always prefer the highest dwellings. At the door of one of these huts an old motherly-looking woman sat, spinning cotton. I made signs to her that I was hungry, and inquired if she had any victuals with her in the hut. She immediately laid down her distaff, and desired me, in Arabic, to come in. When I had seated myself upon the floor, she set before me a dish of kouskous that had been left the preceding night, of which I made a tolerable meal; and in return for this kindness I gave her one of my pocket-handkerchiefs, begging at the same time a little corn for my horse, which she readily brought me.

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia.

Our day's journey was a short one in consequence of our having started so late. The delay was caused by Charley having captured an emu, a flock of which he met when fetching the horses. By holding branches before him, he was enabled to approach so close to them, that he shot one dead with a charge of dust shot. It was a welcome prize, and repaid us for the delay. To our wounded friends the delay itself was a welcome one.

The mussel-shells of these water-holes appeared to be narrower and comparatively longer than those we had previously seen. Pandanus was, as usual, very frequent; but a middle sized shady wide spreading tree, resembling the elm in the colour and form of its leaves, attracted our attention, and excited much interest. Its younger branches were rather drooping, its fruit was an oblong yellow plum, an inch long and half an inch in diameter, with a rather rough kernel. When ripe, the pericarp is very mealy and agreeable to eat, and would be wholesome, if it were not so extraordinarily astringent.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1857: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau: "There always were poor and rich as now,—in that first year when our ancestors lived on pumpkins and raccoons, as now when flour is imported from the West."

July 4

FOOD & WAR

1778: American Revolutionary War

General George Washington served a double ration of rum to his troops at Valley Forge.

1863: USA Civil War

The siege of Vicksburg ended after forty-six days when the Union forces under General Grant surrounded and entered the city. There they found the proofs of the *Daily Citizen*, dated July 2, but not yet printed on the wallpaper that was being used in place of newsprint. They found the following article prepared by the editor, who had not realized how close was defeat:

The great Ulysses—the Yankee Generalissimo, surnamed Grant—has expressed his intention of dining in Vicksburg on Saturday next, and celebrating the 4th of July by a grand dinner and so forth. When asked if he would invite Gen. Jo Johnston to join he said. “No! for fear there will be a row at the table.” Ulysses must get into the city before he dines in it. The way to cook rabbit is “first catch the rabbit.” &c. *Thursday, July 2, 1863.*

The issue was printed by Grant’s men and distributed with this post-script:

Two days bring about great changes, the banner of the Union floats over Vicksburg, Gen. Grant has “caught the rabbit,” he has dined in Vicksburg, and he did bring his dinner with him. The “Citizen” lives to see it. For the last time it appears on “Wallpaper.” No more will it eulogize the luxury of mule-meat and fricasseed kitten - urge Southern warriors to such diet never-more urge Southern warriors to such diet never-more[.] This is the last wallpaper edition, and is, excepting this note, from the types as we found them. It will be valuable hereafter as a curiosity.

That mule meat had been a significant part of the diet of the soldiers toward the end of the siege caused much amusement in the North, and the *Chicago Tribune* had some fun at the expense of the situation with a factitious bill of fare from the Hôtel de Vickburg.

Hôtel de Vickburg.

Bill of Fare for July, 1863.

Soup.

Mule tail.

Boiled.

Mule bacon with poke greens.

Mule ham canvased.

Roast.

Mule sirloin.

Mule rump stuffed with rice.

Vegetables.

Peas and rice.

Entrees.

Mule head stuffed a la mode.

Mule beef jerked a la Mexicana.

Mule ears fricasseed a la gotch.

Mule side stewed, new style, hair on.

Mule spare ribs plain.

Mule liver hashed.

Side Dishes.

Mule salad.

Mule hoof soused.

Mule brains a la omelette.

Mule kidney stuffed with peas.

Mule tripe fried in pea meal batter.

Mule tongue, cold, a la Bray.

Jellies.

Mule foot.

Pastry.

Pea meal pudding, blackberry sauce.

Cottonwood berry pies.

Chinaberry tart.

Dessert.

White oak acorns.

Beech nuts.

Blackberry leaf tea.

Genuine Confederate coffee.

Liquors.

Mississippi water, vintage of 1492, superior, \$3.00.

Limestone water, late importation, very fine, \$2.75.

Spring water, Vicksburg brand, \$1.50.

Meals at all hours. Gentlemen to wait upon themselves. Any inattention on the part of servants will be promptly reported at the office.

Jeff. Davis & Co.,

Proprietors.

Card.—The proprietors of the justly celebrated Hotel de Vicksburg, having enlarged and refitted the same, are now prepared to accommodate all who may favor them with a call. Parties arriving by the river, or Grant's Island route, will find Grape, Canister & Co.'s carriages at the landing, or any depot, on the line of entrenchments. Buck, Ball & Co. take charge of all baggage. No effort will be spared to make the visits of all as interesting as possible.

1863: USA Civil War

From the memoranda of Walt Whitman:

4 th July—Battle of Gettysburg. I walk'd on to Armory Hospital—took along with me several bottles of blackberry and cherry syrup, good and strong, but innocent. Went through several of the Wards, announc'd to the soldiers the news from Meade, and gave them all a good drink of the syrups with ice water, quite refreshing. . . . Meanwhile the Washington bells are ringing their sundown peals for Fourth of July, and the usual fusillades of boys' pistols, crackers, and guns.

1918: France, World War I

From the war diary of U.S. serviceman Clarence Richmond:

We slept till rather late in the morning. The day brought nothing to indicate that it was the Fourth of July. We all took advantage of the opportunity to wash and clean up a little, also to get rid of a good crop of whiskers. Got a good meal, which was pretty badly needed just at this time.

FOOD FIRSTS

1924

Caesar Salad was invented on this day, according to Julia Child. The truth of this may never be confirmed, but her story is convincingly specific. Child said that on July 4, 1924, in Tijuana, Mexico, Caesar's Place was packed with Hollywood folk who had been there to enjoy their holiday away from the constraints of

Prohibition. By the end of the busy night, the kitchen was nearly empty except for a few ingredients—romaine lettuce, Romano cheese, bread, olive oil and some eggs. A few hungry guests were still hovering around, so, the story goes, the proprietor Caesar Cardini put them together and came up with the now-famous Caesar Salad.

1942

The Margarita cocktail was invented on this day by Francisco “Pancho” Morales, according to *The Border Cookbook* by Cheryl and Bill Jamison. The story is that a woman came into the bar and ordered “a Magnolia.” Pancho did not know what it was, but did not want to admit it, so made a cocktail with tequila, and called it a Margarita—the Spanish word for daisy.

FOR RETIRED CHEFS

1942: New Paltz, New York

The famous *Maître d’* Oscar Tschirky (“Oscar of the Waldorf”) bequeathed his summer home to the *Society Culinnaire*. With the addition of other substantial donations, the *Maison Familiale* (or Culinarians’ Home) was opened as a retirement home for any chef, whether rich or poor.

FOOD BUSINESS

1780: Manchester, England

Elizabeth Raffald, the author of a highly successful book, *The Experienced English Housekeeper* (1769), was a woman of many skills. Over her lifetime she ran several inns and coffee houses, an employment agency for servants, and a confectioners shop. She compiled a street directory and wrote a book on midwifery.

On this day in 1780 she issued the following notice:

The ladies’ stand on Kersal Moor [racecourse] will be opened on Wednesday next for the accommodation of ladies and gentlemen of the town and neighbourhood of Manchester, where coffee, tea, chocolate,

strawberries, cream, &c., will be provided every Wednesday and Friday during the strawberry season. By the public's most obliged and humble servant, Elizabeth Raffald.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1586: Greenland

From *The Second Voyage Attempted by Master John Davis, with Others, for the Discovery of the North–West Passage, in Anno 1586*. In the journal entry for the day, the writer notes the diet of the indigenous people:

They eat all their meat raw, they live most upon fish, they drink salt water, and eat grass and ice with delight.

1769: Tahiti

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks:

“*Otahite*” Very little company today. I employd myself in planting a large quantity of the seeds of Water melons, Oranges, Lemons, limes &c. which I had brought from Rio de Janeiro; they were planted on both sides of the fort in as many varieties of soil as I could chuse. I have very little Doubt of the former especialy coming to perfection as I have given away large quantities among the natives and planted also in the woods; they now continually ask me for seeds and have already shewd me melon plants of their raising which look perfectly well. The seeds that Captn Cooke sewd have provd so bad that no one has come up except mustard, even the Cucumbers and melons have faild, owing probably to the method of their being packd which was in small bottles seald down with rosin.

1806: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day William Clark wrote:

This being the day of the decleration of Independence of the United States and a Day commonly celebrated by my Country I had every disposition to selebrate this dav and therefore halted early and partook of a Sumptious

..... and my and more than any and part of a supper
Dinner of a fat Saddle of Venison and Mush of Cows (roots) after Dinner
we proceeded on.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1825: London, England

Mrs. Arbuthnot wrote in her journal of a ball at St. James's on this day:

I was at a ball at St James' on the 4th. It was very magnificent, all the Royal Family were there & every body dressed as fine as they could be. The supper was very *bad*, positively I could not get any thing to eat, & it was a *standing up* supper, which is not very Royal I think, the King himself ate standing. There were no French wines, bad fruit, no hot meats or soups; in short, an individual wd. not have ventured to give so bad a supper. I suppose it is Lady Conyngham's economy. She is the most avaricious woman in the world and I have understood, considers dining out as *tant de gagné* upon the weekly bills.

1838: USA

From the *American Journals* of Nathaniel Hawthorne, on the Independence Day festivities: "A very hot, bright, sunny day; town much thronged; booths on the Common, selling gingerbread, sugar-plums, and confectionery, spruce beer, lemonade. Spirits forbidden, but probably sold stealthily."

July 5

DR. BRAN

1795: America

Sylvester Graham, the man who gave his name to Graham flour, bread, and crackers was born on this day in Connecticut. In his own time he was variously seen as an eccentric, a genius, a quack, or a visionary for his ideas on diet, health, and sexual behavior.

Graham came to believe that a simple diet was the path to physical and mental

Graham came to believe that a simple diet was the path to physical and moral health. His “Bland Diet” was essentially vegetarian, and excluded all alcohol, tea, coffee, and other stimulants. He was particularly vehement on the subject of bread made from over-refined flour, and he made many enemies amongst bakers and butchers whose wares he condemned.

Some of the specifics of his theories seem bizarre today. He contended that salt and other condiments (as well as sexual excess) caused insanity, cooked vegetables were against God’s law, and chicken pies caused cholera. He promoted a strict eating regimen of three meals a day, at intervals of precisely six hours, with no snacking in between. As well as sexual restraint he prescribed fresh air and daily bathing in cold water, wearing loose fitting clothing, drinking only when thirsty and never with meals.

Graham was the butt of much ridicule by newspaper journalists and others. One local newspaper called him “Dr Bran, the philosopher of sawdust pudding,” and the poet Emerson named him the “poet of bran and pumpkins.” Nevertheless, he attracted a huge following, and his public appearances were guaranteed to attract huge crowds, complete with vocal dissenters and occasionally rioters.

FOOD & THE LAW

1819: Britain

The Pepper Act took effect on this day. The full name of the act was as follows:

An Act for granting to His Majest[y] certain additional Duties of Excise on Tea, Coffee and Cocoa Nuts, Tobacco and Snuff, Pepper, Malt, and *British* Spirits, and consolidating the same with the former Duties thereon; and for amending certain Laws of Excise relating thereto.

Penalties for breaches of various aspects of the act included a fine of 100 pounds on those in possession with intent to deliver adulterated pepper.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1883: USA

William Horlick, of Racine, Wisconsin, was granted Patent No. 278,967 for his

“Granulated Food for Infants and Process of Preparing the Same.” The product was initially marketed under the name Diastoid Milk, but within a short time was rebranded as Horlick’s Malted Milk powder.

This invention has for its object, first, to provide a non-farinaceous highly-nutritious food for infants and invalids by combining the nutritive parts of the cereals with milk; and, secondly, to render such food free from all souring tendency irrespective of the climate or state of the atmosphere to which it may be subjected, and yet of such a nature as to be readily soluble in water.

In carrying out my invention I take equal parts of selected barley-malt and ground wheat (or oats) and thoroughly macerate or soften the same in pure fresh cow’s milk, sufficiently to admit of the whole being stirred and mixed so as to form a loose soft mash. I then place the mash in a kettle provided with a steam jacket, where it is gradually raised to a temperature of 150° Fahrenheit, and kept constantly stirred or agitated, so as to prevent the possibility of any damage thereto by reason of the heat. The mash being kept at this degree (150° Fahrenheit) for half an hour, the starch is thus transformed into dextrine and grape-sugar through the action of the diastase contained in the malt. It is then raised to the temperature of 170° Fahrenheit, and retained at that degree of heat for fifteen minutes, after which it is taken out of the kettle, placed in bags, and pressed, the liquid extract running from the bags, when pressed, through very fine sieves, which serve to reject all husks and insoluble matter. This fine liquid is then put into a vacuum-pan provided with a strong central shaft having teeth or knives, the latter serving, when the shaft-is revolved, during the evaporation or drying of the extract, to keep the mass cut up into small parts until the whole is reduced to a dry powdered extract. This extract readily dissolves again in water.

EXPLORERS & FOOD

1564: England

Captain John Hawkins sailed from Plymouth on his second voyage aboard Queen Elizabeth’s ship the *Jesus of Lubek*.

We had sight of certaine islands of sand, called the Tortugas. . . . These

Islands beare the name of Tortoises, because of the number of them, which there do breed. . . . Of these we tooke very great ones, which have both backe and belly all of bone, of the thickness of an inch: the fish whereof we proved, eating very much like veale; and finding a number of egges in them, tasted all of them, but they did eat very sweetly.

1797: Africa

The Portuguese explorer Francisco José de Lacerda e Almeida (1750–1798) traveled through what is now Zambia in 1798, and later wrote of his adventures in *To the Land of King Cazembe*. On July 4 they had been “thrown into confusion by the sudden flight of more than thirty bearers, who left Crown property to be plundered,” so they needed to reduce their loads.

As sailors in a terrible storm throw cargo overboard to lighten the ship, so we reduced our goods to the most needful. I began reforms at the provisions, and divided our salt amongst the soldiers and porters, reserving a little for general use; when it is finished we must do without it, as they say “hungry men want no mustard.” A box of tea was distributed to the officers, also a case of spirits: I remained without any, as, despite the cold weather, I cannot touch strong liquor. Besides other things, two kegs and a large pot of vinegar remained behind—acids disorder the stomach, and roast meat is meetest for health. Seeing my party downhearted, I represented to them the honour and glory of our undertaking, and concluded by saying that anyone who liked, might return home.

1862: Africa

John Hanning Speke, from his *Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile*:

By the king’s order we attended at the palace early. The gun obtained us all a speedy admittance, when the king opened conversation by saying, “Well, Bana, so you really are going?” “Yes; I have enjoyed your hospitality for a long time, and now wish to return to my home.” “What provision do you want?” I said, Five cows and five goats, as we shan’t be long in Uganda; and it is not the custom of our country, when we go visiting, to carry anything away with us.” The king then said, “Well, I wish to give you much, but you won’t have it”; when Budja spoke out, saying, “Bana does

not know the country he had to travel through; there is nothing but jungle and famine on the way, and he must have cows"; on which the king ordered us sixty cows, fourteen goats, ten loads of butter, a load of coffee and tobacco, one hundred sheets of mbugu, as clothes for my men, at a suggestion of Bombay's, as all my cloth had been expended even before I left Karague.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1639: England

Lady Brilliana Harley, at home in Brampton Bryan in Herefordshire, wrote regularly to her son, Edward, while he was away at Oxford. She also frequently sent gifts of food. "Your father has divers times sence you went asked for strawberry butter, and in memory of you this day I made Hacklet make some. I wisch you a disch of it."

1732: Lapland

From *A Tour in Lapland* by botanist Carl von Linné:

One of the Laplanders' dishes, called *Kappi*, or *Kappa-tialmas*, is prepared in the following: manner. While the milk of the reindeer, intended for making cheese, is warm, before the rennet is added to it, a film rises to the top, which is taken off carefully with a spoon, and put into the bladder of a reindeer. This is hung up against the side of the hut to dry; after which it is eaten, being esteemed a great delicacy. They frequently mix some kind of berries with it when used. The fruit called *Hjortron*, (Cloud-berry, or *Rubus Chamaemorus*,) bruised and eaten with milk.

1828: England

From Dorothy Wordsworth's *Journal of a Tour in the Isle of Man*: "Very bright morning. Wrote to Mrs. H. and then to Duke's gardens, which are beautiful. . . . Ate strawberries in the shade. Lord Fitzallan's children keeping their mother's birthday in the strawberry beds."

1837: USA

Nathaniel Hawthorne was staying with his “friend of half a lifetime” in Maine.

I am his guest, and my presence makes no alteration in his way of life. Our fare, thus far, has consisted of bread, butter, and cheese, crackers, herrings, boiled eggs, coffee, milk, and claret wine.

1855: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau:

In middle of the forenoon sailed in the Melrose. . . . Went to Gifford’s Union House (the old Tailor’s Inn) in Provincetown. . . . Talked with a man who has the largest patch of cranberries here,—ten acres,—and there are fifteen or twenty acres in all. The fishermen sell lobsters fresh for two cents apiece.

1889: France

Vincent van Gogh’s sister-in-law Jo wrote to him telling him of her pregnancy, and some details of their domestic life.

Paris . . . In one of your last letters you asked Theo whether he was still dining at restaurants. Oh dear no—never—what would be the good of being married if one could not dine at home? He always comes home at twelve o’clock to lunch and at half-past seven for dinner. Often in the evening somebody drops in, Isaäcson or Hart Nibbrig. Tersteeg dined with us twice, and De Haan has come to see us too—and when he was there Mr. Pissarro and his son came too.

July 6

DINING ABOARD A DIRIGIBLE

1919: Long Island, New York

The British Airship R.34 landed at Long Island on this day, and the captain and

crew were entertained at dinner in the permanent Officers' Mess, Mitchel Field, Long Island.

Celery, Olives, Radishes, Salted Almonds

Cold Consommé *en tasse* Tomato Bisque

Tomato and cucumber salad with mayonnaise dressing

Fruit Punch

Roast Breast of Vermont Turkey, giblet sauce, cranberry jelly

Mashed Potatoes Asparagus

Assorted Layer Cake

Neapolian Ice-Cream

Coffee and Iced Tea

FOOD FOR EMIGRANTS

1850: England

The *Illustrated London News* carried an article on this day that described the procedure of emigration from Liverpool to the United States.

The Tide of Emigration to the United States And to The British Colonies

The scene in the Waterloo dock, at Liverpool, where all the American sailing packets are stationed, is at all times a very busy one; but, on the morning of the departure of a large ship, with a full complement of emigrants, it is peculiarly exciting and interesting. The passengers have undergone inspection, and many of them have taken up their quarters on board for twenty-four hours previously, as they are entitled to do by terms of the act of Parliament. Many of them bring, in addition to the boxes and trunks containing their worldly wealth, considerable quantities of provisions, although it must be confessed that the scale fixed by the

Government to be supplied to them by the ship is sufficiently liberal to keep in health and comfort all among them, who, in their ordinary course of life, were not accustomed to animal food. The following is the scale, in addition to any provisions which the passengers may themselves bring:—

- 2½ lb of Bread or biscuit (not inferior to navy biscuit)
- 1 lb Wheaten Flour
- 5 lb Oatmeal
- 2 lb Rice
- 2 oz Tea
- ½ lb Sugar
- ½ lb Molasses

Per week. To be issued in advance, and not less often than twice a week.
Also:—

3 quarts of Water daily.

5 lb of good Potatoes may, at the option of the master, be substituted for 1lb of oatmeal or rice; and in ships sailing from Liverpool, or from Irish or Scottish ports, oatmeal may be substituted, in equal quantities, for the whole or any part of the issues of rice.

Vessels carrying as many as 100 passengers must be provided with a seafaring person to act as passenger's cook, and also with a proper cooking apparatus. A convenient place must be set apart on deck for cooking, and a proper supply of fuel shipped for the voyage. The whole to be subject to the approval of the emigration officer.

FOOD & WAR

1942: Australia, World War II

Rationing of tea by coupon was introduced. It had been rationed since April

1942, but via a system of registration with a local supplier. The allowance was half a pound per person every five weeks.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1857: At Sea

From the journal of James Letcher, en route from Cornwall to the goldfields of Ballarat, Victoria, Australia: “We sailed fast last night, today sailing slow very nigh her right course to within a point or so, if the same wind was coming over her stern as it is her bows we should be travelling fast. The black cook killed a sheep today, poor as a crane.”

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1664: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

Up betimes, and my wife also, and got us ready; and about 8 a-clock having got some bottles of wine and beer and neat’s tongues, we went to our barge at the Towre, where Mr. Pierce and his wife and a kinswoman and his sister, and Mrs. Clerke and her sister and cousin were to expect us. And so set out for the Hope, all the way down playing at Cards and other sports, spending our time pretty merry, Came to the Hope about one, and there showed them all the ship(s) and had a collacion of anchoves, Gammon &c.; and after an hours stay or more imbarked again for home.

Neat’s tongue is calf’s tongue, and was a popular and useful dish for centuries. It was useful because it could be preserved in the same way as ham, by curing it in salt—which was rather confusingly referred to as drying. Neat’s tongue was a common ingredient in mincemeat, which was used all year round, not solely at Christmas. Here below are two recipes for Neat’s tongues, from a cookery book of Pepys’s time.

Neats-tongues, an excellent way how to dry them

Take Salt, beaten very fine, and salt-Peter, of each a like quantity, rub your

Tongues very well with the Salts, and cover them all over with it; an as it wast[e]s, supply them with more, then roul them in Bran, and dry them before a soft fire; before you boil them, lay them in Pump-water one night, and boil them in Pump-water.

Neats-tongue Minc'd Pye

Take a fresh Neats-tongue, boil, blanch, and mince it, then mingle them together, and season them with an ounce of Cloves and Mace beaten, some Salt, half an Orange preserved, and a little Lemon-peel, shred with a quarter of a pound of Sugar, four pound of Currans, a little Verjuice and Rosewater and a quarter of a pint of Sack, stir all together, and fill your Pyes.

—*The Gentlewoman's Companion* (1670) by Hannah Woolley

1774: America

John Adams wrote to his wife, Abigail, from Falmouth, Massachusetts. He has decided for patriotic reasons to renounce tea.

I believe I forgot to tell you one Anecdote: When I first came to this House it was late in the Afternoon, and I had ridden 35 miles at least. “Madam” said I to Mrs. Huston, “is it lawfull for a weary Traveller to refresh himself with a Dish of Tea provided it has been honestly smuggled, or paid no Duties?” “No sir, said she, we have renounced all Tea in this Place. I cant make Tea, but I’le make you Coffee.” Accordingly I have drank Coffee every Afternoon since, and have borne it very well. Tea must be universally renounced. I must be weaned, and the sooner, the better.

1870: England

The Reverend Frances Kilvert described in his diary an archery party he had attended:

It was a pretty sight to see the group of ladies with their fresh light dresses moving up and down the long green meadow between the targets, and the arrows flitting and glancing white to and fro against the bank of dark green trees. After shooting 3 dozen arrows the company retired at 6 to the summerhouse where they partook of tea, coffee, cider cup *etc.*

July 7

DINNER WITH THE AMBASSADOR

1517: England

On July 7, the Greater Feast Day of St. Thomas of Canterbury, the ambassador of the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian visited the court of Henry VIII. He was entertained at a banquet at Greenwich. The feast lasted seven hours, and the guests were served ten courses; musicians played throughout the meal.

The Venetian ambassador was impressed and wrote,

Every imaginable sort of meat known in the kingdom was served, and fish too, including prawn pasties of perhaps twenty different kinds, made into the shapes of castles, and of animals of various kinds, as beautiful as can be imagined. In short, the wealth and civilisation of the world are here, and those who call the English barbarians seem to me to make themselves barbarians.

FOOD BUSINESS

1928: USA

The Chillicothe Baking Company of Missouri sold the first packages of presliced bread, which they called Sliced Kleen Maid Bread. The slicing was done with a machine invented in 1917 by Oscar Rohwedder of Davenport, Iowa. The *Missouri Constitution-Tribune* had this to say on the day: “So neat and precise are the slices, and so definitely better than anyone could possibly slice by hand with a bread knife that one realizes instantly that here is a refinement that will receive a hearty and permanent welcome.”

FOOD & THE LAW

1533: Venice, Italy

At a meeting of the “Council of Ten” (the governing body of Venice at the time), it was decided to exempt rice from an excise tax because it was used as an

it was decided to exempt rice from an excise tax because it was used as an alternative to vegetables. This is one of the earliest references to rice in northern Italy.

FOOD FIRSTS

1897: USA

The earliest English language mention of “milk” in relation to soy beans occurs in an article in the *USDA Farmers’ Bulletin* published on this day. The article by Langworthy describes the nutritional composition of Japanese soy foods including miso, natto, and tofu.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1732: Lapland

The botanist Carl von Linné visited Lapland in 1732 on behalf of the Royal Society. He met his first Laplander family on this day.

About the evening of the following day we reached the nearest spot where any Laplander was at that time settled. The man we met with gave me a very good reception, and furnished me with a couple of reindeer skins to sleep between. Immediately after my arrival, the herd, consisting of seven or eight hundred head of reindeer, came home. These were milked, and some of the milk was boiled for my entertainment, but it proved rather too rich for my stomach. My host furnished me with his own spoon, which he carried in his tobacco-bag. On my expressing a wish, through my interpreter, to have the spoon washed, my Lapland friend immediately complied, taking a mouthful of water, and spitting it over the spoon.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1665: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys. He is very proud of his wine collection.

Up, and having set my neighbour Mr. Hudson, wine cooper, at work drawing out a tierce of wine for the sending of some of it to my wife. I

drawing out a tierce of wine for the sending of some of it to my wife—1
abroad, only taking notice to what a condition it hath pleased God to bring
me, that at this time I have two tierces of claret—two quarter-cask of
canary, and a smaller of sack—a vessel of tent, another of Malaga, and
another of white wine, all in my wine-cellar together—which I believe none
of my friends of my name now alive ever had of his own at one time.

Tierce: This is an old measure of volume: it was a third of a pipe, or half a firkin, or two-thirds of a hogshead. In today's measure it is about thirty-five imperial gallons (159 litres) or forty-two U.S. gallons.

Claret: The word comes from the French *clair*, meaning clear or light, and it meant a wine of a color somewhere between “red” and “white” (or “yellow”) wine, although by the time of Sam Pepys, it was already being used to refer mainly to red wine.

Canary: A sweet white wine produced around Teneriffe.

Sack: Fortified white wine, such as we would now call sherry.

Tent: This comes from the Spanish *tinto*, and meant wine of a deep red color, usually from Spain.

Malaga: This was a sweet fortified wine from Andalusia, usually made from pedro ximenez grapes.

July 8

ESCOFFIER & THE KAISER

1913: France

The famous chef Escoffier met Kaiser Wilhelm II aboard the SS *Imperator* of the Hamburg-Amerika Line on this day. The kitchens and restaurant aboard the ship were modeled on those of the Ritz-Carlton, where Escoffier was chef. He was charged with orchestrating meals aboard the *Imperator*, while the kaiser was in France. One hundred and forty-six important personages sat down to a sumptuous lunch and dinner, and it is said that the kaiser was so impressed that he quipped to Escoffier, “I am the Emperor of Germany, but you are the

Emperor of Chefs,” a tag that remained with Escoffier ever after.

The luncheon menu was as follows:

Hors d'oeuvres Suédois

Potages

Consommé en gelée, Tortue clair

Suprêmes de sole au vin du Rhin

Selle de mouton de pré-salé aux laitues à la Greque

Petites pois à la Bourgeoise

Poularde au paprika rose gelée au Champagne

Cailles aux raisins

Coeurs de romaine aux oeufs

Asperges sauce Mousseline

Ecrivisses à la Muscovite

Soufflé surprise

Friandises

Fruits

Pêches, fraises, nectarines

Raisins Muscats

Café à la mode orientale

Vins: Eitchbacher 1897

Château Rausan Séglar 1878

Veuve Cliquot

Ponsardin Rosé, Heidseick & Co. 1900

Fine Champagne

La Grande Marque de l'Empereur

FOOD & WAR

1940: Britain, World War II

The food minister, Lord Woolton, announced that notice had been given to hotels and restaurants to stop all “luxury feeding.” The *Times* newspaper gave details of his announcement:

The proprietors, he said, could cut out luxuries better than he could tell them, and he did not wish to interfere with the use of made-up dishes, soups, or hors d' oeuvres because that would lead to waste of food. He was more concerned to cut out a course of fresh fish or meat from each meal, making dining much simpler. After July 15, no person will be served at one meal with more than one course of either meat, game, poultry, or fish.

Confectioners have been told to stop the icing of cakes, and the Minister has made it clear that the former confectionery cannot continue.

Lord Woolton is considering the introduction of an Order to make it a criminal offence to waste food. A similar order was in force during the last War, and the Minister is inquiring into its operation.

1941: Britain, World War II

Extracts from a series of letters from readers to the *Times*, criticizing the waste of food in the armed forces, were published on this day.

Reader's Criticisms

. . . No-one would grudge the men and women of the Forces ample supplies, but, as letters from correspondents show, it is considered utterly

wrong that at a time of such difficulty as the present waste should be tolerated.

Recent letters include one in which details of the food position in a troopship are given by a man serving in her.

This . . . is a typical luncheon or dinner menu served daily to officers and other first class passengers:—Choice of two soups; fish; choice of two hot meats; choice of two cold eats; two or three vegetables; choice of two sweets; choice of two cheeses; dessert and coffee. All this is ad lib., and there is nothing to prevent one partaking of every dish on the menu, in spite of the present restrictions that meat, fish, and cheese should not be served at one meal.

The daily issue to each of the troops on board includes:—Meat, 10 oz.; sugar, 3 oz.; tea, 1.2 oz.; and ample supplies of jam, cheese, and bacon. The other, and depressing side of this question is the vast quantity of “waste” which is thrown over the side every day. On day 37 bread rolls were counted floating by. The amount of raw meat cast into the sea would provide dripping and cooking fats for hundreds of families. Pounds and pounds of potatoes, peas, beans, and dried apricots, prunes, and figs are wasted continually.

. . . Does the Ministry of Food consider this fair in a totalitarian war where the women and children, as we are so often told, are in the front line? One does not grudge food to the fighting Services, but why may not the civilian receive the ample crumbs which fall from the Services’ table? One necessary comment is that food supplies on troopships are not controlled by the Ministry of Food.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1948: USA

Aaron S. Lapin, of St. Louis, Missouri, was granted Patent No. 167,213 for a “Dispensing Container for Fluffed Cream.” The product became known as *Reddi-Wip* and it captured the public desire for convenience—and fun. The product was so successful that in 1998 it was included in *Time* magazine’s list of the century’s one hundred best consumer items.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1497: At Sea

The Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama set sail on this day from Lisbon for the East, in search of spices. He became the first to reach India by sea directly from Europe when he sailed into Calicut on May 20, 1498.

His fleet of four ships had been stocked with supplies for three years. The basic rations for the one-hundred and seventy seamen aboard the ships was 1 lb. salt beef, ½ lb. biscuit, 2½ pints water, and 1¼ pints of wine per person, per day. The ships also carried quantities of lentils, sardines, onions, garlic, plums, almonds, salt, mustard, sugar, and honey.

1770: Australia

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks:

“*Endeavours River.*” At night the Pinnace which had been sent in search of a Passage to leward returnd, she had been unsuccessfull in her main errand. Shoals innumerable she had met with, upon one of them was lucky enough to see a turtle which was pursued and many more were seen, so many that three were taken with only the Boat hook. The promise of such plenty of good provisions made our situation appear much less dreadful; were we obligd to Wait here for another season of the year when the winds might alter we could do it without fear of wanting Provisions: this thought alone put every body in vast spirits.

1860: Australia

From John McDouall Stuart’s journal of his fourth expedition, during which he fixed the center of the continent.

The Bonney Creek. All hope of making the coast is now gone. On weighing our rations to-day, I find that we are again short since we halted here. The man Ben has been making it a regular practice to steal them since he has been with me. I have caught him several times doing so, and all the threats and warnings of the consequences have had no effect upon him. They deter

him for a day or two, and then he is as bad as ever. I have been in the habit of reducing our allowance to make up for the loss, which has been very hard upon Kekwick and myself; he has helped himself to about double his allowance during the journey.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1663: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys. His wife is away in the country.

And then at noon home to dinner alone, upon a good dish of eeles given me by Michell the Bewpers-man. . . . I stepped to Sir W. Batten and there stayed and talked with him, my Lady being in the country, and sent for some lobsters; and Mrs. Turner came in and did bring us an Umble-pie hot out of her oven, extraordinarily good, and afterward some spirits of her making (in which she has great judgement), very good, and so home, merry with this nights refreshment.

“*Umbles*” or *nombles* or *humbles* are “the inwards of a deer or other beast,” in other words, the offal or entrails, although sometimes it referred also to the back and loins of a deer. The umbles were traditionally the perquisite of the gamekeeper, but the well-to-do also prized them for putting into pies.

To make an Umble-pye, or for want of Umbles, to doe it with a Lambes head and Purtenance

Boyle your meate reasonable tender, take the flesh from the bone, and mince it small with Beefe-suet and Sparrow, with the Liver, Lights, and Heart, a few sweet Hearbes and Currans. Season it with Pepper, Salt, and Nutmeg: bake it in a Coffin raised like an Umble pye, and it will eate so like unto Umbles, as that you shall hardly by taste discern it from right Umbles.

—*A New Booke of Cookerie (1617)* by John Murrell

1828: England

From Dorothy Wordsworth’s *Journal of a Tour in the Isle of Man*:

Rose before six. Pleasant walk to Port Murray [Port St. Mary]. . . . Close and hot, weary descent and ascent to a pot-house on the heights; no spirits, nothing but ale; but greedily I fixed my eyes on the potato pot ready for her husband's dinner. "Can I have some potatoes?" "Plenty," was the glad, reply, but it was strange to her that I would not partake of the fish (Mullet, I believe a delicacy). Her husband could not speak an English word, had not yet been out after the herrings, but ready for a call. She seemed quite contented and chearful. Fowls pecking about, a wry-necked lamb, and she produced a cuckow full-fledged with gaping yellow mouth—would have given it us, I doubt not, yet seemed greatly to prize it; boiled me two eggs, produced a pewter spoon from sugar pot unwashed, then brought her silver one; no bread—on great days makes tea. We gave her a shilling. "I know not what I must do for change," with a perplexed countenance, and what was her surprize and delight to hear it was all for herself! [S]he insisted on our taking another pint. "We must have it," and she pledged Mr. H. We shook hands at parting; she was astonished at my walking, . . . H. and I soon to [P], most thankful for rest. The vale behind so wildly softly beautiful I should have been delighted in it had I not been so weary. Refreshed by tea, but appetite poor till broiled ham was proposed by hostess, which I enjoyed. To bed by daylight.

1856: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau:

Sam Wheeler, who did not know there were snap-turtles here, says he saw opposite to his boarding-house, on the sidewalk, in New York, the other day, a green turtle which weighed seven hundred and twenty pounds, which in a short time dropped eggs enough to fill a vessel some feet in diameter. He partook of some of the soup made of it, and there were several eggs in it, which were luscious.

July 9

THE QUEEN AT KENILWORTH

1575: England

Queen Elizabeth I arrived at Robert Dudley's estate at Kenilworth, for an eighteen-day stay. The entertainments provided "eclipsed in splendour and profuse expense anything of the kind that had ever been known in this country."

A magnificent pageant was set up for the queen's arrival. According to one of the chroniclers of the event, at one point "was there a goodly bridge set up . . . over which the queen did pass, on each side whereof were [seven pairs of] posts erected, with presents upon them unto her, by the gods." The first pair of posts had wire cages with "dainty birds" from *Sylvanus*, the God of Fowl, and then came fruits from *Pomona*, grains from *Ceres*, grapes and wine from *Bacchus*, fish and seafood from *Neptune*, armour and weapons from *Mars*, and musical instruments from *Phoebus*.

One of the many banquets was described by the chronicler Robert Laneham:

After the play, out of hand followed a most delicious and (if I may so term it) an ambrosial banquet: whereof, whether I might more muse at the daintiness, shapes, and the cost; or else, at the variety and number of the dishes (that were three hundred), for my part, I could little tell then; and now less, I assure you. Her Majesty eat smally or nothing; which understood, the courses were not so orderly served and sizely set down, but were, by and by, as disorderly wasted and coarsely consumed; more courtly, methought, than courteously: But that was no part of the matter: it might please and be liked, and do that it came for, then was all well enough.

FOOD & WAR

1917: Britain, World War I

The government announced that it would investigate complaints about palatability of "War Bread" and the problems of poor flour quality and "ropey" dough. These defects were necessitating the dumping of thousands of pounds of bread and defeating the purpose of the wheat conservation program.

1940: Britain, World War II

Tea rationing was introduced, the allowance being two ounces per person, per week—a very small amount for the tea-loving British. Tea could be bought anywhere it was on sale: it was not necessary, as with other items, to register

any more it was on sale, it was not necessary, as with other items, to register with a retailer.

VINTNERS' COMPANY

1610: London, England

The Vintners' Company was one of the liveried companies of London. On this day, the company decided to revive an ancient tradition related to the annual Election Day dinner.

Leverye To Serve At Ye Principall Feasts

This daye after some relason made and debate had of an auncient custome used some tymes in this Companie, and still continued amongst other Worshipfull Companies of this Cittye, That is, that the youngest of the Liverye at the chief feasts and solemnities at the Coen Hall, have carried the dyett to all the tables, and afterwards sett themselves according to their places; It is not thought meete ordeyned and agreed that this daye and from tyme to tyme hereafter soe many of the youngest of the Lierye as shall suffice shall carrye the dyett at every Election dinner to the Upper Table in the Hall, and to the Ladyes and Gentlewomen onlye, and the rest of this service t be p'formed by the Waytors onlye.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1872: USA

Captain John F. Blondel of Thomaston, Maine, was granted Patent No. 128,783 for an "Improvement in Doughnut-Cutters." His equipment removed the dough from the cutter-tube automatically.

FOOD BUSINESS

1831: Scotland

The *Scotsman* carried the following article on this day that shows that take-out is not a modern phenomenon.

Cow Heel and Tripe

JANET LUMSDEN takes this opportunity of expressing her sincere gratitude to the public for the very flattering encouragement she has received for a number of years, and respectfully intimates, that as the Magistrates have resolved to take down the Booth in which she formerly carried on business, she has removed to *No.1, Market St*, opposite the Slaughter House. Her new premises are spacious, not exposed either to the scorching sun or withering winds; and her Cow Heel and Tripe are now far superior to what they were formally. In the evenings from 7–9 o'clock, she is now supplying her customers and families with warm Tripe, prepared in the real *Glasgow* style, in any quantity her friends are pleased to order.

1887: Britain

Paper napkins were introduced by stationery manufacturers John Dickenson at their annual dinner at the Castle Hotel, Hastings. The company had imported a quantity of flimsy paper “blanks” with decorative borders from Japan, which were then overprinted by the company. The idea quickly became popular for promotional and souvenir napkins.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1769: London, England

Benjamin Franklin was in London, and wrote to his friend John Bartram on this day.

It is true many People are fond of Accounts of old Buildings, Monuments, &c. but . . . for one I confess that if I could find in any Italian Travels a Receipt for making Parmesan Cheese, it would give me more Satisfaction than a Transcript of any Inscription from any old Stone whatever.

1818: Scotland

John Keats, on a walking holiday in Scotland, finished a letter to his brother Tom on this day. “We are lodged and entertained in great varieties—we dined yesterday on dirty bacon[,] dirtier eggs[,] and dirtiest Potatoes with a slice of

Salmon.”

1855: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau:

Peterson brings word of blackfish. I went over and saw them. The largest about fourteen feet long. Nineteen years ago three hundred and eighty at this (Great) Hollow in one school. Sometimes eat them. Small says they generally come about the last of July; some yield five barrels, average one barrel.

I find the edible mussel generally in bunches as they were washed off the rocks thirty or forty together, held together by the twine-like byssus. Many little mussels on the rocks exposed at high tide.

July 10

A DIPLOMATIC MISSION

1522: France

François I, the king of France, was about to make open war on the Emperor Charles. Henry VIII, fearing damage to his French lands, and escalation to an international incident, sent Cardinal Thomas Wolsey to Calais “to intreate an amitic & peace between those mighty princes.” Wolsey and the large retinue of noblemen, clerics, “and many other Knightes, Esquires, Gentlemen, Doctores, and learned men” set off from Dover for the short journey to Calais on July 10. At Calais, according to the chronicler Richard Grafton, the party were well housed and fed:

The Englishe Lordes, knights, Esquiers, yomen of the kings Garde and every other being to the number of foure hundred and three score horse, were well lodged every man after his degree, and every lodging furnished wyth fewell, Bread, Bere, Wyne, Beeves, Mutton, Veles, Lambes, Venison, and all manner of daintie viand, as well in fishe as fleshe, with no lacke of snices and hanketting dishes

spices and sumptuary laws.

MONASTERY MEALS

817: France

Perhaps the earliest sumptuary law enacted was the one intended to regulate monastery meals, which was set down at the Council of Aix-la-Chapelle on this day. It was ordered that “no food must be taken either before or after the hour,” except for children and the sick—in other words, there was to be no food between regular meals, which were always meatless.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1519: Vera Cruz

Hernando Cortes wrote a report in the form of a letter on his expedition to the New World to his patrons Queen Doña Juana and the Emperor Charles V, her son.

The people who inhabit this country, from the Island of Coztumel, and the Cape of Yucatan to the place where we now are. . . . Their food is maize and grain, as in the other Islands, and *potuyuca*, as they eat it in the Island of Cuba, and they eat it broiled, since they do not make bread of it; and they have their fishing, and hunting, and they roast many chickens, like those of the Tierra Firma, which are as large as peacocks.

These “large chickens” were turkeys—a native of the Americas, and at that time unknown in the Old World.

1675: At Sea

Henry Teonge, chaplain on board his Majesty’s ships *Assistance*, *Bristol*, and *Royal Oak*, wrote in his diary on this day in 1675:

Wee are past the Rock of Lysbon. . . . This day our noble Capt. Feasted the officers of his small squadron with 4 dishes of meate, viz. 4 excellent henns and a piece of porke boyled, in a dish; a giggett of excellent mutton and

turnips; a piece of beife of 8 ribbs, well seasoned and roasted; a couple of very fatt geese; last of all, a great Cheshyre cheese.

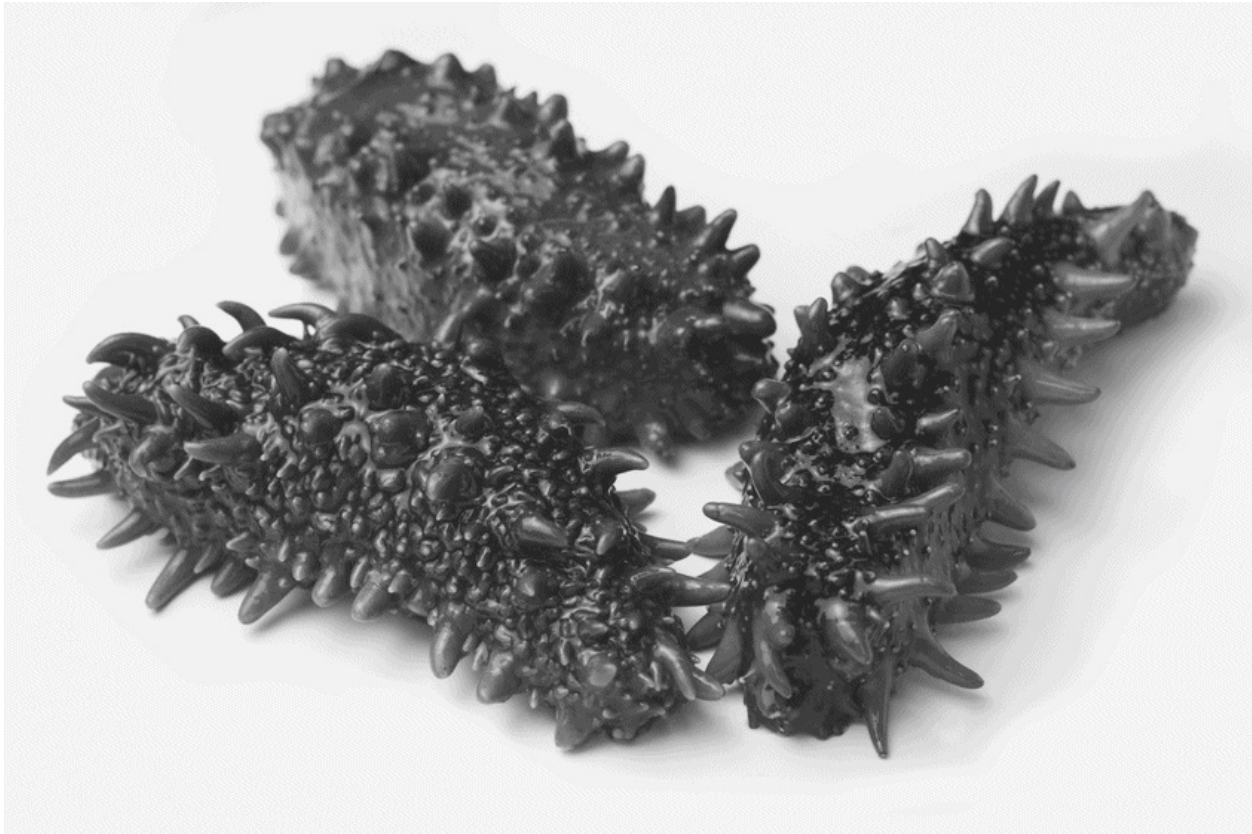
1836: Australia

Major Thomas Mitchell and his party were near the present-day site of Stawell on his second expedition into western New South Wales. A hunting party killed two emus; the eggs were extracted from the female and “afforded us a light and palatable breakfast for several days.”

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt’s journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia. He mentions the trepang (*bêche de mer*) voyages of the Malays.

We killed our little steer in the afternoon of the 10th, and the next day we cut the meat into slices, and hung it out on a kangaroo net: the wind was high, the sun warm, and our meat dried most perfectly. . . . Whilst we were in the midst of our work, some natives made their appearance. . . . One of them had a singular weapon, neatly made, and consisting of a long wooden handle, with a sharp piece of iron fixed in at the end, like a lancet. The iron most probably had been obtained from the Malays who annually visit the gulf for trepang.



TREPANG

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1666: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

[T]he yard being very full of women (I believe above 300) coming to get money for their husbands and friends that are prisoners in Holland; and they lay clamouring and swearing, and cursing us, that my wife and I were afeared to send a venison-pasty that we have for supper tonight to the cook's to be baked, for fear of their offering violence to it—but it went, and no hurt done. . . . I with them till almost 9 at night, and then they and we and Mrs. Mercer, the mother, and her daughter Anne, and our Mercer, to supper to a good venison-pasty and other good things, and had a good supper, and very merry, Mistresses Bateliers being both very good-humoured. We sang and talked, and then led them home, and there they

made us drink; and, among other things, did show us, in cages, some birds brought from about Bourdeaux, that are all fat, and, examining one of them, they are so, almost all fat. Their name is Ortolans, which are brought over to the King for him to eat, and indeed are excellent things.

1838: USA

From Nathaniel Hawthorne's *American Journals*:

A fishing excursion, last Saturday afternoon, eight or ten miles out in the harbor. . . .We cooked our fish on a rock named "Satan," about forty feet long and twenty broad, irregular in its shape, and of uneven surface. . . . We built two fires. . . . It was after nine before we finished our supper, which we ate by firelight and moonshine, and then went aboard our decked boat again,—no safe achievement in our ticklish little dory.

July 11

FOOD FIRSTS

1869: USA

The first successful long-distance transport of machine-frozen food in the United States was realized on this day with the arrival of the SS *Agnes* after a six-day voyage from Texas to New Orleans. The man behind the venture was Henry Peyton Howard of San Antonio, and the refrigeration method used in the *Agnes*'s twenty-five-by-fifty-foot storeroom was that invented by John Gorrie. The frozen beef was unloaded into a meat-preserving warehouse built in Fulton Street, and all present voted the venture an overwhelming success.

The *Times Picayune* of July 13 gave a lengthy report on the event, and its future promise under the following heading: "Markets of the World Thrown Open to the Stock-raisers of Texas Annihilation of the Slaughter-House Monopoly"

The meat was declared

just as free from decomposition as if it had just been slaughtered, and a gentlemen, who is fastidious in the selection of his edibles, informs us that he and several others had a tender loin from the warehouse on Sunday

He and several others had a tender loin from the warehouse on Sunday, which he assures us was as fine a steak as he ever put fork into.

The advantages were obvious:

A great advantage in transporting beef by this method is that four times the quantity can be carried in the space required for live stock, the offal being dispensed with, which constitutes one half the weight. The beef being killed while in prime order, and being transferred at once to the refrigerator on the vessel, is necessarily of much finer quality than that which is driven hundreds of miles overland, or that which is transported by vessel alive.

Some of the meat was served at a celebratory banquet on July 12 at the Charles Hotel to great acclaim, and much was also distributed to hospitals, hotels, and restaurants.

A PUDDING FESTIVAL

Aughton, England

The Aughton Pudding Festival has been held—with a few interruptions—approximately every twenty-one years since 1782. A huge pudding is made for the whole village to share. In 1992, the pudding weighed 3.28 tons (7,231 lbs.). Mixing started on July 3, and the pudding was ready in time for the festival.

FOOD & WAR

1918: USA, World War I

The Sugar Equalization Board was created as an agency of the Food Administration, on the recommendation of Food Administrator Hoover (who became chairman of its board of directors), in the face of an expected shortage of sugar. The board bought and distributed the entire Cuban sugar crop in 1918–1919. It also equalized the prices of domestic and imported sugar, thus stimulating U.S. sugar production. During the war the board also regulated coffee imports. Having served its purpose, it was abolished in July 1926.

ANNIVERSARY

1603: England

Kenelm Digby was born on this day. Digby was a man of many parts—naval commander, natural philosopher, courtier, scientist, and diplomat . He also wrote a book (published posthumously) that contains the earliest known collection of recipes for fermented drinks: *The Closet of the Eminently Learned Sir Kenelme Digbie Kt Opened: Whereby Is Discovered Several Ways for Making of Metheglin, Sider, Cherry-Wine, &c. Together with Excellent Directions for Cookery: As also for Preserving, Conserving, Candying, &c.*

At this time, clocks were unheard of in kitchens, and most kitchen staff were not literate. One method of timing a short process was to instruct the kitchen hand to perform it for the duration of several prayers or psalms—this having the added benefit of attending to their spiritual growth. Digby, a staunch Catholic, advised when making tea, “The hot water is to remain upon it no longer than whiles you can say the The Misere Psalm very leisurely.” To recite the Misere (Psalm 50) very slowly takes two and a half to three minutes, which is about the right steeping time for tea. In a recipe for cooking lampreys he advises, “[P]ut your Lampreys as they come out of the River, into this scalding water, and cover the pot that little while they remain in, which must be but a moment, about an Ave Maria while.” An “Ave Maria while” is about twelve seconds.

THE POTATO

1795: England

An article in the *Times* promoted the use of the potato as food for the poor.

The solution to the lack of grain for our rising population is simple. The poor should adopt the diet of Lancashire, with its abundant potatoes and oatmeal porridge. Also, the poor can eat a soup of water and potatoes. If a bread is required, one of corn and potatoes is both pleasant and nutritious.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1862: Africa

John Hanning Speke, from his *Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the*

Nile:

I strolled with my rifle (11th) to see what new animals could be found; but no sooner did I wound a zebra than [*sic*] messengers came running after me to say Kari, one of my men, had been murdered by the villagers three miles off; and such was the fact. He, with others of my men, had been induced to go plundering, with a few boys of the Waganda escort, to a certain village of potters, as pots were required by Budja for making plantain-wine, the first thing ever thought of when a camp is formed.

1911: Antarctica

During the British Antarctic Expedition led by Robert Falcon Scott, Edward Wilson instigated a six-week trip from Cape Evans to Cape Crozier to study the Emperor penguin breeding colony. The trip took place during the depths of the dark Antarctic winter and was also an opportunity to experiment with rations ahead of the planned journey to reach the South Pole. He later wrote about the trip as *The Worst Journey in the World*. The three men left on June 27, and returned on August 1, after a spectacularly hazardous and unpleasant journey.

On July 11 he wrote,

We have been discussing our respective rations, they have been somewhat revised as follows:—On July 6th Cherry felt the need for more food and would have chosen fat, either butter or pemmican, had he not been experimenting on a large biscuit allowance. So he increased his biscuits to 12 a day and found that it did away to some extent with his desire for more food and fat. But he occasionally had heartburn and has certainly felt the cold more than Bowers and I have, and has had more frostbite in hands, feet and face than we have. I have altogether failed to eat anything approaching my allowance of 8oz of butter a day. The most I have managed has been about 2 or 3oz. Bowers has also found it impossible to eat his extra allowance of pemmican for lunch.

Wilson died, with Scott, on the return journey from the South Pole.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1788: Spain

William Eden was the British ambassador to Spain in 1781–1789. He wrote a letter to his mother on this day.

It is easy to eat well and even luxuriously in Spain, because the fish, the turkeys, the venison, the vegetables, the fruit, the rabbits, and the hares and partridges, and ducks, are all excellent, and the rest is sometimes good; but the beef and mutton are lean and hard, and dry, and tasteless, and we hardly ever touch either the one or the other.

1789: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde:

[D]ined and spent the Afternoon at Ansford. . . . At Mr. Frank Woodfordes with him and his Wife . . . at Ansford Parsonage the Place and House in which I was born and lived many Years but had not been in it before this day, for almost fifteen years, owing to a disagreement between us, which I now hope will be ever done away. . . . We had a very good Dinner, a fine piece of Salmon, a Leg of Mutton roasted, fricaseed Rabbit, a Couple of Ducks roasted and Pea, a currant Pye, and Syllabubs &c. A good Desert of Fruit after Dinner, Strawberries, Cherries and Currants.

Syllabub: This is a drink or dish made of milk or cream, which is curdled by the addition of wine, cider, or other acid, and usually then sweetened and flavored. The preferred method was to milk the cow directly into the bowl of other ingredients, the jet of pressured milk helping to provide the desired light, frothy texture. In wealthy households, a cow was often kept close to the kitchen, in case the lord or lady of the house called for a syllabub—it being not possible to prepare them in advance. A recipe in Eliza Acton’s *Modern Cookery, in All Its Branches* (1845) describes this technique.

Birthday Syllabub

Put into a large bowl half a pound of sugar broken small, and pour on it the strained juice of a couple of fresh lemons, stir these well together, and add to them a pint of port wine, a pint of sherry and half a pint of brandy; grate in a fine nutmeg, place the bowl under the cow, and milk it full. In serving it put a portion of the curd into each glass, fill it up with whey, and pour a little rich cream on the top. The rind of a lemon may be rasped with part of the sugar when the flavour is approved, but it is not usually added.

the sugar when the flavour is approved, but it is not usually added.

Juice of lemons 2; sugar ½ lb. or more; port wine 1 pint; sherry 1 pint; brandy ½ pint; nutmeg 1; milk from the cow 2 quarts.

Obs.—We can testify to the excellence of this receipt

July 12

THE COOKS OF LONDON

1482: London, England

King Edward IV granted the cooks of London the first of its eight charters, and from this day it became incorporated as the Worshipful Company of Cooks. It is the smallest of the ancient livery companies of London.

[T]he freemen of the Mystery of Cooks have for a long time personally taken and borne and to this day do not cease to take and bear great and manifold pains and labour as well at our great feast of St. George and at others according to our command.

By the Charter of Charles II, the Cooks' Company claimed the right to serve the sovereign on all civic occasions. They were also given exemption from jury duty in city courts. Their claim to the right to sell beer without a license was rejected, however, on the grounds that an Act of Parliament exempted only the members of the Vintners' Company from the requirement for a license.

MAD COW DISEASE

1990: Britain

The Commons Agriculture Select Committee had been tasked with an urgent enquiry into the possible threat to humans from Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE, or "Mad Cow Disease") amid growing public concern. A report by the Tyrrell Committee on the Control of BSE in Cattle on this day was "confident that the disease will not be highly contagious" and argued that

[i]f the disease were transmitted from dam to calf exclusively, or nearly

exclusively, there would still be a tendency for the disease to die out, because cows which became clinically affected would have fewer calves than those which remained well, and infected animals would not produce enough calves for the epidemic to be maintained. Consequently preventing the progeny of cattle suffering from BSE from breeding would do no more than accelerate the self-limitation of BSE that would occur anyway.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1827: Britain

Robert Vazel was granted a patent for a piece of equipment intended to prevent damage “which corn and pulse too frequently sustain by rain and wind during harvest,” this being effected “by placing round a stake driven into the ground eight sheaves of the grain, and placing a hood sheaf spread round the upper part of the upright sheaves. This arrangement is called the ‘corn-preserver.’”

1932: USA

Otto Frederick Rohwedder, of Davenport, Iowa, received Patent No. 1,867,377 for a “Machine for Slicing an Entire Loaf of Bread at a Single Operation.” It was the first loaf-at-a-time bread-slicing machine with multiple cutting bands, the space between which could be changed, and it was designed to “co-operate with a bread-wrapping machine.”

1870: USA

William W. Lyman from Meriden, Connecticut, was granted Patent No. 105,346 for his “Improvement in Can Openers.” His design used a rotating cutter.

SPACE FOOD

2000

A Russian Proton-K rocket carrying a service module to the International Space Station was launched. On its sides were thirty-foot Pizza Hut logos—an advertising stunt which reputedly cost the company \$2.5 million.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1771: England

Captain James Cook reported to the Navy Victualling Board on the success of sauerkraut as an anti-scorbutic during his first voyage aboard the *Endeavour*.

I am to acquaint you that Sour Kroutt together with the many other Antiscorbutics my Lords Commrs of the Admiralty were pleased to order to be put on board did so effectually preserve the People from a Scorbutic Taint that no one dangerous case hapned in that disorder during the whole voyage, and it is the Surgeons, Officers and my opinion that Sour Kroutt had a great Share in it and that it will always be found extreamly beneficial to seamen when they are obliged to live long upon a Salt diet; it has the good quality not to loose any part of its Efficacy by Keeping, we used the last of it in September last after having been above two years on board & it was then as good as at the first.

At the time, it was commonly believed that the highly salted foods were the cause of the scurvy, not the absence of fresh vegetables and fruits (scurvy is due to severe vitamin C deficiency, although vitamins were not known at the time).

The surgeon's mate, Perry, delivered his report on the various substances tested as anti-scorbutics, on the same day.

Sour Krout, Mustard, Vinegar, Wheat, Inspissated Orange and Lemon Juices, Saloup, Portable Soup, Sugar, Melasses, Vegetables (at all times when they could possibly be got), were some in constant, others in occasional use: these were of such infinite service to the people in preserving them from a Scorbutic Taint, that the use of the Malt was, with respect to necessity, almost entirely precluded. Again, Cold Bathing was encouraged and enforced by Example; the allowance of Salt beef & pork was abridged from nearly the beginning of the voyage and the Sailors' usual custom of mixing salt beef fat with their flour &c strictly forbad.

1799: Australia

Matthew Flinders, aboard the sloop *Norfolk* and traveling up the eastern coast of

Australia, was in the Clarence River estuary. He wrote in his journal,

The Palm-nut tree grows here[;] . . . this is probably one of the most southern situations it will be found in. We found the individual nuts scattered about the fire places of the natives, and observed that the lower ends had been chewed and sucked in the same manner that artichokes are eaten; this method, on getting some that were ripe, we afterwards practised. The taste was rather pleasant at first but left an astringency behind that scarcely tempted me to try a second. The eatable part of the nut in this way is so small as to be scarcely worth the trouble of sucking it out from the fibres.

1817: Australia

From John Oxley's journal of his expedition in 1817 to explore the course of the Lachlan River:

We were this day once more cheered by the sight of rising ground; Macquarie's Range just appearing above the horizon, distance about forty miles; and we felt that we were again about to tread on secure and healthy land, with a chance of procuring some sort of game, which would now be very acceptable, our diet being entirely confined to pork and our morsel of bread. The weather is far too cold for us to have any hopes of procuring fish; all our attempts to catch them for the last fortnight being unsuccessful.

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia. One of the party is particularly keen to find coffee substitutes, and he experiments with every possible plant.

Five miles farther, we came to a fine creek, at which we encamped. Its water-holes were surrounded by the Nelumbiums of the Mackenzie, and by a fine yellow Ipomoea, with larger flowers than that described as growing at the Mitchell. We gathered a considerable quantity of Nelumbium seeds, which were very palatable, and, when roasted and pounded, made a most excellent substitute for coffee.

1862: Australia

John McKinlay (1819–1872) was born in Scotland and emigrated to Australia in 1836. In 1861–1862, he led an expedition to search for the missing Burke and Wills party.

In camp, drying horseflesh; the wind from east; dewy, and at daylight foggy along the banks and valley of the river but soon clears off; we have had splendid weather for drying our meat. Caught some very nice fish but not sufficient to be of any real service. The timber is not anything like as large or so good as it is further up the river. The bed of the river here is from 400 to 500 yards wide. The horse Goliah has given us fifty-two pounds dry meat. We have shot a few crows, a cormorant, and a white eagle with blue back, to make a stew for breakfast, that with a little salted hide and about two pounds dried meat will make a very good meal as matters stand at present.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1754: England

Henry Fielding was aboard ship, but becalmed in the harbor awaiting a change in the weather. He wrote an account of his travels in *The Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon*. “This day our ladies went ashore at Ryde, and drank their afternoon tea at an alehouse there with great satisfaction: here they were regaled with fresh cream, to which they had been strangers since they left the Downs.”

1820: At Sea

The Master of the *Felicity*, Robert Oakapple, recorded in his log on this day that a rabbit had been brought on board. “Mate reports that seaman had brought one of those furry things on board in a covered cage. Ordered its neck wrung and body thrown overboard.”

British sailors thought a rabbit on board would bring bad luck, and even mentioning them by name was risky, hence the captain’s referral to it as a “furry thing” (an alternative was “the long-eared animal”). The origin of the superstition is not known, but perhaps it is related to the reputation of rabbits as the avatars of witches—who, as females, were also considered unlucky aboard

the avatars of witches—who, as females, were also considered unlucky aboard ship.

July 13

BREAKFAST AT THE CECIL

1905: London, England

The Hotel Cecil, on Conduit Street, offered the following breakfast menu on this day.

Tea, Coffee, or Chocolate, with Porridge, Preserves,
and the choice of two Dishes.

Fried Halibut.

Grilled Sole.

Finnan Haddocks. Kippers.

Bloaters.

Tomato Omelette.

Scrambled Eggs and Mushrooms.

-

Grilled Ham or Bacon with Fried

Or Poached Eggs.

Grilled Sausages & Bacon.

Vienna Stea.

COLD JOINTS

CURED JOINTS

Roast Beef Roast Mutton. Ham. Tongue

Galantine. Pressed Beef

The menu includes a fine selection of cured fish, much loved by the British for breakfast. They include the following:

- *Finnan Haddocks*: These are originally from Findon in Aberdeenshire, Scotland, and are considered a great delicacy. The fish is headed, gutted, lightly salted, and should properly be cold-smoked over a peat fire.
- *Bloaters*: Whole herrings, only lightly salted and smoked. They do not keep well and must be eaten within a couple of days.
- *Kipper*: A fish (usually a herring) split, gutted, salted, and smoked.

Other varieties not mentioned in the menu above are as follows:

- *Buckling*: Herrings that are gutted, beheaded, salted, and “cooked” by hot-smoking.
- *White Herring*: Salted but not smoked.
- *Red Herring*: Heavily salted, and given a long smoking that gives a red color, prolonged keeping powers, and a spectacularly strong smell—a smell strong enough to put any hunting animal off any scent, hence the metaphorical use of the phrase.

Finnan or Aberdeen Haddocks

Clean the haddocks thoroughly, and split them; take off the heads, put some salt on them, and let them lie two hours, or all night, if they are required to keep more than a week; then, having hung them two or three hours in the open air to dry, smoke them in a chimney over peat or hardwood sawdust.

Where there is not a chimney suitable for the purpose, they may be done in an old cask open at both ends, into which put some sawdust with a red-hot iron in the midst; place rods of wood across the top of the cask, tie the haddocks by the tail in pairs, and hang them on the sticks to smoke; the heat should be kept as equal as possible, so it will be the fish to get alternately hot

should be kept as equal as possible, as it spoils the fish to get alternately hot and cold. When done, they should be of a fine yellow colour, which they should acquire in twelve hours at farthest. When they are to be dressed, the skin must be taken off. They may be boiled, or broiled; and are generally used for breakfast.

—*The Practice of Cookery, Adapted to the Business of Everyday Life*
(Edinburgh, 1830) Mrs. Dalgairns

FOOD & THE LAW

1923: Britain

The “Intoxicating Liquor (Sale to Persons under Eighteen) Bill” passed by the House of Commons with a vote of 259 to 10. The bill was popularly known as “Lady Astor’s Bill,” as it was introduced by Viscountess Astor. It was the first bill introduced to Parliament by a woman.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1813: France

At a meeting of the French Academy of Science on this day, Michel Eugène Chevreul reported on a fat-like substance that he named margaric acid, or margarine. One of his pupils was Hippolyte MègeMouries. In 1869, Napoleon III offered a prize for a butter substitute that would be cheap, and keep well, and Mège Mouries proposed the new substance, margarine. On April 12, 1872, a regulation permitted it to be sold, but it was not to be labeled as butter.

1954: USA

Edwin Traisman, of Des Plaines, Illinois, and Wallace Kurtzhalt, of Wheeling, Illinois, assignors to the Kraft Food Co., were granted Patent No. 2,683,665 for a “Process of Making Grated Cheese.” The purpose of the process was to produce grated cheese that was “resistant to caking or agglomeration under ordinary atmospheric conditions.”

BEER HISTORY

1568: England

This is said to be the day that Alexander Nowell, dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in London, "discovered" bottled beer. He was apparently a keen fisherman, and found a bottle of ale he had accidentally left behind at one of his fishing spots two years earlier. To his surprise, it had improved with aging, and also "it was not a bottle but a gun, such was the sound of it when opened."

1996: London

Harrods put up for sale *Tutankhamun Ale*. The formula was developed by Cambridge archaeologists working with Scottish and Newcastle breweries. Archaeologists working in Egypt had uncovered the remains of several brewing rooms in the Sun Temple of Queen Nefertiti, and the information was gleaned from analyzing the residue in the ancient brewing jars and translating hieroglyphics in the chambers. Only one thousand bottles were produced, and the first was sold for \$7,686, but the remainder went for between \$76 and \$500.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1772: At Sea

Captain James Cook set sail on his second voyage on this day, aboard the ship *Resolution*, accompanied by the *Adventure*, captained by Tobias Furneaux. Their mission was to circumnavigate the globe and find out once and for all if the fabled southern land *Terra Australis* did in fact exist, and if so, to claim it for Britain.

The provisions aboard ship included 9,531 pounds (27,003 kilograms) of ships' biscuit (hardtack); 7,637 four one-pound pieces of salt beef; 14,214 two-pound pieces of salt pork; 19 tons of beer; 1,397 imperial gallons (6,350 liters) of spirits; 1,900 pounds (860 kilograms) of suet; 210 gallons of olive oil; 20,000 pounds (9,100 kilograms) of "sour kroust" (as an anti-scorbutic); and 30 imperial gallons (140 liters) of "Mermalade of Carrots." Both ships also carried livestock including bullocks, sheep, goats, pigs, and poultry.

The "marmalade of carrots" was also to be trialled as an anti-scorbutic. Cook wrote of it:

Marmalade of Garrets, is the Juice of Yallow Garrets [yellow carrots] inspissated till it is of the thickness of flued honey or Treacle which last, it looks like and in some degree tastes like; it is recommended by Baron Storsch of Berlin, as a very great Antiscorbutick. He says “a Spoonful of this Marmadlade, mix’d with Water, taken now and then will prevent the scurvcy, it will even cure it if constantly taken.” It is much used by the poor people in Germany.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1665: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

I by water, at night late, to Sir G. Carterets. . . . There came to Dinner, they having dined, but my Lady caused something to be brought for me and I dined well, and mighty merry, especially my Lady Slany and I about eating of Creame and brown bread—which she loves as much as I.

1856: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau:

To Corner Spring. Thimble-berries are now fairly ripe and abundant along walls, to be strung on herd’s-grass, but not much flavor to them; honest and wholesome.

Plucked a handful of gooseberries at J. P. B.’s bush, probably ripe some time. It is of fair size, red-purple and greenish, and apparently like the first in garden, except it is not slightly bristly like that, nor has so much flavor and agreeable tartness. Also the stalk is not so prickly, but for the most part has one small prickle where ours has three stout ones. Our second gooseberry is more purple (or dark-purple with bloom) and the twig less prickly than the wild. Its flavor is insipid and in taste like the wild.

1897: England

From the journal of the novelist Arnold Bennett (1867–1931):

I lunched at the Rainbow, a type of City restaurant which is passing away. A large dark room, sombrely furnished in mahogany, and gaslighted, even in the sunshine of a hot July day. In the centre a table at which a stout carver in white cap, coat and apron, carves the saddle of mutton and the sirloin of beef—dishes which are never varied, and of which the customers seem never to tire. Here come lawyers and other hommes d'affaires of middle-age to whom luncheon is—a serious meal, not to be ordered without minute instructions to the obsequious waiter. “Do you call this underdone?” a portly customer asks sharply. “Yes, sir.” “Well, I don’t. Take it back.” “Yes, sir.” Here one drinks either stout from a tankard, or some sound wine; but if one orders wine, one gives the waiter directions as to the temperature. It is de rigueur. The door leading into the dining-room is labelled “coffee-room” and there is a significant notice[,] “Ladies dining-room upstairs.” Ladies are not willingly admitted to the ground floor, and those women, if any, who dared to pass that door labelled “coffee-room” would be requested to leave, or at least pointed at as unwomanly. This is one of the last strongholds of the conservative male. Yet here we males respect ourselves; we have a regard for the decencies. “Gentlemen are requested not to smoke pipes in this establishment.”

July 14

BASTILLE DAY DINNER

1909: Argentina

The French embassy in Buenos Aires held a dinner on their national day, with the following menu:

Canapés de Caviar

Aspic de foie gras en belle Vue.

Crème Victor Hugo

-

Filet de soles à la Polignac

-
Croustades de riz d'agneau à la reine

-
Suprêmes de Martinettes Sully

-
Dinde Rôti

-
Salade de Saison.

-
Gateau Saint Honoré

-
Gateau à la modern

-
Café – Liqueurs - Havanes

Xerés, Sauternes, Médo, Champagne

MIDNIGHT SUPPER

1938: At Sea

Passengers aboard RMS *Franconia* were offered a very substantial supper on this night.

MIDNIGHT SUPPER

-
Minestrone, Milannaise

-

Bacon or Ham and Eggs

Broiled Pork Sausage and Mashed Potatoes

-

COLD BUFFET:-

Sandwiches any Style (to order)

Salmon Mayonnaise

Roast Beef York Ham Ox Tongue

Pressed Beef Leicester Brawn

Roast Chicken Roast Turkey

SALADS:-

Lettuce Tomatoes

-

Macedoine of Fruit

Ice Cream Assorted Pastry

Cheese Biscuits

-

Tea Coffee Cocoa

SMUGGLING RICE

1787: Italy

Thomas Jefferson was pursuing his interest in the rice of Northern Italy, and was

keen to obtain some for trialling in America. As export of seed rice was prohibited, he smuggled some out of the country.

Letter to Edward Rutledge

Paris, July 14, 1787.

Dear Sir,

. . . I was glad to find that the adaptation of your rice to this market was considered worth attention, as I had supposed it. I set out from hence impressed with the idea the rice-dealers here had given me, that the difference between your rice and that of Piedmont proceeded from a difference in the machine for cleaning it. At Marseilles I hoped to know what the Piedmont machine was; but I could find nobody who knew anything of it. I determined, therefore, to sift the matter to the bottom, by crossing the Alps into the rice country. I found their machine exactly such a one as you had described to me in Congress in the year 1783. There was but one conclusion then to be drawn, to wit, that the rice was of a different species, and I determined to take enough to put you in seed; they informed me, however, that its exportation in the husk was prohibited, so I could only bring off as much as my coat and surtout pockets would hold. I took measures with a muleteer to run a couple of sacks across the Apennines to Genoa, but have not great dependence on its success. The little, therefore, which I brought myself, must be relied on for fear we should get no more; and because, also, it is genuine from Vercilli, where the best is made of all the Sardinian Lombardy, the whole of which is considered as producing a better rice than the Milanese. This is assigned as the reason for the strict prohibition.

FOOD & THE LAW

1992

European Union Regulations for the protection of important foods were established on this day.

EU Regulation No. 208/192 provides for two categories of registered Geographical Indications: Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) and

Protected Geographical Indication (PGI).

The essential difference between the two categories is that for a PDO, all the protection, processing, and preparation must occur within the designated area. This category equates to the previously established AOC system for wines in France. PGI status requires that only one of either production, processing, or preparation must take place within the designated area. . . . The PDO category equates to the previously established AOC system for wines in France.

FOOD & WAR

1939: Britain, World War II

The government announced that all infants and nursing mothers would get fresh milk free, or at no more than tuppence a pint.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1795: Africa

From Mungo Park's journals of his exploration in Africa. He is in Moorja at this time.

As most of the people here are Mahomedans, it is not allowed to the kafirs to drink beer, which they call *Neo-dollo* (corn spirit), except in certain houses. In one of these I saw about twenty people sitting round large vessels of this beer with the greatest conviviality, many of them in a state of intoxication. As corn is plentiful, the inhabitants are very liberal to strangers. I believe we had as much corn and milk sent us by different people as would have been sufficient for three times our number; and though we remained here two days, we experienced no diminution of their hospitality.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1667: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

[A]nd by and by Mrs. Turner came to us by agreement . . . and taking some bottles of wine and beer and some cold Fowle with us into the Coach . . . and so towards Epsom, talking all the way pleasantly. . . . And so over the common and through Epsom town to our Inne, in the way stopping a poor woman with her milk-pail and in one of my gilt Tumblers did drink our bellyfuls of milk, better than any Cream; and so to our Inne and there had a dish of creame, but it was sour and so had no pleasure in it.

July 15

THE PRISON HULKS

1776: Britain

With transportation of prisoners to the American colonies becoming increasingly problematic as the revolutionary movement there gathered strength, the British Parliament passed the “Hulks Act” on May 23, 1776. The act authorized prisoners to be kept in derelict vessels on navigable rivers in England. They were to work raising sand and gravel from the River Thames. As could be predicted, conditions were terrible and the death rate high. On July 15, a newspaper reported on the operation of the Act:

The law for sentencing the convicts to work upon the Thames is indeed severe, but we trust it will be salutary. They are to be employed in as much labour as they can sustain, to be fed with legs and shins of beef, ox cheek, and such other coarse food . . . to be clad in some squalid uniform; never to be visited without the consent of the overseers.

In 1777, prison reformer John Howard established a Commission of Enquiry into the conditions aboard the hulks. The conditions were truly terrible.

Overcrowding, malnutrition, and disease were rife, and of the 632 prisoners aboard the first hulk, the *Justicia*, 176 died. The diet was meager in the extreme. Five days each mess of six men received a ratio of five pounds of biscuit (described as moldy, broken, and consisting largely of crumbs), one half pound of “rough meat” (usually ox-cheek), three pints of dried peas, and a quantity of watery gruel. The remaining two days each mess shared three pints of oatmeal

made into porridge, five pounds of bread, and two pounds of cheese. Each man also received one quart of “small beer” on four days a week.

A NAVY LUNCHEON

1915

The luncheon menu aboard a British naval vessel on this day demonstrates a fine sense of humor on the part of men at war. The vessel is not named, but the menu is interesting in that the names of the dishes speak to a number of wartime themes.

Luncheon

Hors D’Oeuvres Cape Station

Soup a la Rufiji

Fried Fresh Flying Fish – Flux Sauce

Chicken en Fuselage

Seized Turkey – Cranberry Solder

Blued Ham

Jacketed Potatoes

Air cooled Spinach

Asperges en Essence

Oeufs au mal atterissage

Dessert de Keonigsberg

Café Kikunja

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1869: France

Hippolyte Mege-Mouries of Paris was granted Patent No. 86,480 for a fatty substance with a pearly gloss that he called margarine, from *margaritos*, the Greek word for pearls. It was made from rendered beef and/or mutton tallow that was mechanically treated and then mixed with soured skimmed milk to form an emulsion. The original formula also had a small amount of cow udder added, because of a false understanding of the physiological process of milk production. Large-scale commercial production of margarine began in 1873.

FOOD & WAR

1780: American Revolutionary War

Brisout de Barneville, a forty-four-year-old sous-lieutenant under Rochambeau, was the commander of the French Revolutionary Force in America. He noted in his diary on this day that the butchers and bakers were already established in the camp at Newport.

The daily ration for the troops was 1½ pounds of bread plus 2 loth rice besides 1 pound of beef. Six thousand troops consumed 300 to 400 head of cattle every six to eight weeks, plus a large amount of salt pork. The troops seem to have been quite creative in supplementing their rations. Later in July, Lafayette wrote to Washington that in Newport “Chicken and pigs walk Between the tents without being disturb’d.”

FOOD & THE LAW

1364: England

Edward III granted a charter to the Vintners Company allowing them to control wine imports. Four persons were to be appointed wardens and were sworn as overseers of the selling of wines and taverns. The Vintners were also given leave to export cloth, fish, and herrings in exchange for wines.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1557: Russia

From *The First Voyage Made by Master Anthonie Jenkinson, from the Citie of London, toward the Land of Russia, Begunne the Twelfth of May, in the Yeare 1557*:

[F]ifteenth day [of July]; and then I departed in a little Boat up the river of Duina, which runneth very swiftly, and the selfe day passed by the mouth of a River called Pinego, leaving it on our left hand fifteene verstes from Colmogro. On both sides of this River Pinego is high Land, great Rockes of Alabaster, great Woods, and PineApple trees lying along within the ground, by which report have lyen there since Noes flood.

The “Pineapple trees” were simply pine trees. “Apple” was a generic name for the fruit of any tree, so “pineapples” were pine cones, from some species of which were obtained edible pine nuts. When pineapples (*ananas*) were found in the New World, it was their resemblance in shape and surface markings to the pine cone that gave rise to their name in English.

1770: Australia

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks:

The Beast (*a kangaroo*) which was killd yesterday was today Dressd for our dinners and provd excellent meat. In the evening the Boat returnd from the reef bringing 4 Turtles, so we may now be said to swim in Plenty. Our Turtles are certainly far preferable to any I have eat in England, which must proceed from their being eat fresh from the sea before they have either wasted away their fat, or by u[n]natural food which is given them in the tubs where they are kept given themselves a fat of not so delicious a flavour as it is in their wild state. Most of those we have caught have been green turtle from 2 to 300 lb weight: these when killd were always found to be full of Turtle Grass (a kind of Conferva I beleive); two only were Loggerheads which were but indifferent meat; in their stomachs were nothing but shells.

1840: Australia

From the journal of Edward John Eyre (1815–1901) on an expedition into the

inland of Central Australia:

Having hobbled the horses, I took my gun, and walked down the watercourse, to a place where it forms a junction with a larger one, but in neither could I find any more water. Upon my return, I found that the native boy had caught an opossum in one of the trees near, which proved a valuable addition to our scanty and unvaried fare.

July 16

FOOD & WAR

1775: American Revolutionary War

Abigail Adams wrote to her husband John Adams on this day, giving him news of the conditions in Boston, which was under siege (the siege lasted from April 19, 1775, to March 17, 1776).

As to intelligence from Boston, tis but very seldom we are able to collect any thing that may be relied upon, and to report the vague flying rumours would be endless. I heard yesterday by one Mr. Rolestone a Goldsmith who got out in a fishing Schooner, that there distress encreased upon them fast, their Beaf is all spent, their Malt and Sider all gone, all the fresh provisions they can procure they are obliged to give to the sick and wounded.

FOOD & THE LAW

1561: The Isle of Man, Britain

A large number of orders pertaining to the running of the Castle Rushen were set down on this day. Some of the orders relating to the victualling of the household were these:

The Book of Orders made by the Comissioners, Anno Domini 1561, at the Castle Rushen, in the Isle of Mann, the 16th Day of July, in the Yeare aforesaid, by Sir Richd. Sherburne, Knight, . . . Lord Stanley, Lord of Mann and the Isles, and of the most noble Order of the Garther, Knight.

IMPRIMIS, forasmuch as great Waste hath been made in the Castle and in the Peele in Bread, Fuell, Candles, and other Things, therefore be it ordained and ordered, the Captain to have a Loaf of Bread, a Gallon of Beere, two Candles in Sumer, and three in Winter, and reasonable in Fuell every Night for his Chamber, within the House 3 Men, one Page, 3 Horses at Hay, and twenty Bowles Oates at the Lord his Price. . . .

The Receivers to have one Pottle of Ale, Half a Loafe of Bread, one Candle in Sumer, two in Winter, and reasonable of Fuell within their Chambers within the House, one Man a Piece, two Horse a Piece, and twelve Bowles of Oates, either of them for their Horses. The Clark of the Rolles one Quart Beere, one Quarter of a Loafe Bread, one Candle in Sumer, and two in Winter, one Horse, one Page, and six Bowles Oates. The Comptroller one Quart Beere, one Quarter Loafe Bread, one Candle in Sumer, and two in Winter, one Horse at Hay, and six Bowles Oats. The Constables of both Places half a Loafe Bread, 2 Candles in Winter, and One in Sumer, Fuell in Winter reasonable fortheir Chambers within the House, to search the Watch; . . .

Itm. That there be no Breakfasts allowed but to the Captaine, Receivers, Comptroller, Hall-keepers, Porters, and to the Brewers, twice in the Weeke, at the Discretion of the Officers; and the said Breakfast to be had within the House, but the Reversion to the Almes Tubb.

Itm. That at the Drinking Bell there be no Cannes of Drink allowed but to the Porters, two at the afternoon; and that they convey not the same out of the House, upon Paine of their Office; and the Watch Man to have a Canne of Beere to the Watch.

Itm. That the Receivers, Stewards, Cooks, and Slaughter-men, see that the Beeves be brought into the Houses, killed and salted, between Michaelmas and Andrew's Day, so many as they shall need'at the aflbresaid Houses, until St. Andrew's Day cdme again, except every Week one Beefe to be spent through the Yeare : and the said Beeves left unkilld of the store, to remain in the richest Men's Hands, and best Farmers, and that they be charged to keepe them, upon double value of the said Beeves, untill they be called for to the use of the said Houses.

THE IRISH FAMINE

1847: Cork, Ireland

The American frigate *Macedonian* arrived in Cork harbor on this day carrying 1,800 tons of Indian corn (maize) for the relief of victims of the potato famine. The cargo was the gift of the Ladies of Brooklyn, and the ship was manned by a crew of six hundred teetotalers under the command of Commodore de Kay. It was reported that it was “estimated that over 25,000 persons owed their preservation to the alms of the American people forwarded by this single ship.”

Ten days later, Commodore de Kay and his officers were entertained by the grateful authorities of the city with a harbour outing and déjeuner (see **July 26**).

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769: Polynesia

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks:

“*Huahine*” Soon after dinner we came to an anchor in a very fine bay called by the natives Owalla and immediately went ashore. As soon as we landed Tupia squatted down on the ground and ranging us on one side and the Indians on the other began to pray, our chief who stood opposite to him answering him in kind of responses. This lasted about a quarter of an hour in which time he sent at different intervals two hankerchiefs and some beads he had prepared for the purpose as presents to Eatua; these were sent among many messages which pass’d backwards and forwards with plantains, malapoides &c. In return for this present to the gods which it seems was very acceptable we had a hog given for our Eatua, which in this case will certainly be our bellies.

1862: Africa

John Hanning Speke, from his *Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile*:

Most of the cows for ourselves and the guides—for the king gave them also

a present, ten each—were driven into camp. We also got 50 lb. of butter, the remainder to be picked up on the way. I strolled with the gun, and shot two zebras, to be sent to the king, as, by the constitution of Uganda, he alone can keep their royal skins.

GLASGOW, 1608

1608: Glasgow, Scotland

William Douglas, the Earl of Angus, was a staunch Catholic in very intolerant Protestant Scotland. He and his family were ordered to confine themselves in Glasgow in 1608. The Angus household accounts offer an interesting glimpse into the food of the time. Beef and other meat were generally sourced from the Earl's estate, but the "spendit" (purchases) of this day in Glasgow included beef and fowl. The amount of meat is not given by weight, but, in the case of butcher meat, by "streks" or "steaks," which seems to represent what we would call a joint or cut of meat. A huge household such as the Angus's would simply not have ordered three or four steaks as we think of them now, but whole beasts or large joints. The account books note what was "restes" (remaining) in the stores after the household meals were taken for the day.

On June 16, the accounts show the following:

Spendit

In beif – iij streks – Restes ix streks.

In weall [veal] – vi streks – Restes iiij streks.

In mowttoun – viij streks – Restes iiij streks.

In cheikeins – vj – Restes x cheiks.

In powts [pullets] iij – Restes iij powts

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1857: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau

FROM THE JOURNAL OF HENRY D. THOREAU:

I hear of the first early blueberries brought to market. What a variety of rich blues their berries present, *i.e.* the earliest kind! Some are quite black and without bloom. What innocent flavors!

July 17

THE IMAGIST DINNER

1914: London, England

Imagism was an early twentieth century movement in poetry that began about 1912. The Anglo-American poets who developed or defined the movement aimed at clarity of expression through the use of free verse, common speech patterns, and strong visual images. The movement was initiated by the American poet Ezra Pound, but Amy Lowell was almost immediately seen as its leader. On this day she invited seven or eight selected poets (including Pound) to a dinner at the Dieu Donnes Restaurant in London to discuss the makeup of the group and the production of an anthology of imagist poetry.

MENU

Hors d'Oeuvre Norvégienne

Consommé Sarah Bernhardt

Bisque de Homards

Filet de sole Lucullus

Cailles en Gelée au Muscats

Selle d'Agneau Richelieu

Canetons d'Aylebury à l'Anglaise

Petits Pois au Laitue

Jambon d'York au Champagne

Haricots Vers Maitre d'Hotel

Bombe Moka Friandises Dessert

Café

THE HOUSEHOLD OF KING JAMES I

1604: England

King James I, in the second year of his reign, signed on this day a long list of ordinances relating to the governing of his household. The intent was to reduce expense, and this was done in part by reducing the number of dishes allowed to each member of the household, and substituting board wages to many of the officers in lieu of their meal allowance (their *Bouche* or *Bouge* of Court).

WHERE, we are trewely informed by our Privy-Council, that if some reasonable Order be not taken, to abate the great and dayly Charge and Expençe of our Household, which of necessity hath bene much moore encreased since our comeing to the Crowne, than was in our deare Sister's time; and that to provide the same Increase of provision will not only fall out more chargeable than we like of, but prove more burthensome and grievous to our loving subjectes, whose quiet and welfare we greatly desire; we therefore thought good to diminish our said dayly Charge of Household by this meanes following, viz.

Very specific details were then laid out in respect of the different members of the household, as the following examples show:

FIRST, Whereas Our-selfe and Our deare Wife the Queene's Majestie, have bene every day served with 30 Dimes of Meate; Nowe, hereafter, according to this Booke signed, Our Will is to be served but with 24 Dishes every Meale, unlesse when any of us sit abroade in State, then to be served with 30 Dishes, or as many more as We shall command.

AND likewise, Doctor Marbecke, Phisition to Our Household, who is to give the like attendance, shall have for his Diett 5 Dishes at a Meale, his Bouge of Court being notwithstanding served unto him, and receive the

Summe of 134*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* per annum, ut supra.

AND, likewise, Our pleasure is, that our Locke-Smith who doth take extraordinary paines, shall have for his two Dishes of Meate, some in diet, 30*l.* to be paid, ut supra.

King James seems to have singled out *sack*—a white fortified wine from Spain, essentially the same as sherry—for particular attention.

AND whereas in times past Spanish Wines, called *Sacke*, were little or no whit used in our Court, and that in late yeares, though not of ordinary allowance, it was thought convenient that such Noblemen and Women, and others of accompte, as had diett in the Court, upon their necessities by sicknesse or otherwise, might have a Bowle or a Glasse of Sack, and so no great quantity spent; we understanding that within these lateYeares it is used as comon drinke and served at meales, as an Ordinary to every meane Officer, contrary to all Order, using it rather for wantonnesse and surfeiting, than for necessity, to a great wastefull expence; yet We considering that oftentimes sundry of Our Nobillity, and others, dieted and lodged in Our Court, may for their better health desire to have Sacke, Our pleasure is, that there be allowed to the Serjaut of Our Seller twelve Gallons of Sacke a day, and no more than the same to bee spent or delivered by him to any person whatsoever at meales as an ordinary allowance, nor to any person allowed in Our Court, but to such of Our Nobility and other of accompte as are allowed diett and lodgeing in Our Court, and in such manner and in such quantity to those that shall sende for the same; and Our Officers of the Greencloth shall set downe in wrighting to Our Officers of Our seller.

FOOD & THE LAW

1947: USA

The U.S. Customs Court in Buffalo, New York, ruled that rhubarb was a fruit, since it was used mainly as such, and would therefore be subject to 35 percent import duty and not 50 percent as applied to vegetables. The decision was made by Judge Genevieve R. Cline, the court's only female judge.

Botanically speaking, rhubarb is a vegetable, because a *fruit* is the seed-bearing part of a flowering plant that derives from the ripened ovary, the seeds being

inside the fruit. According to this definition, the pumpkin is a fruit, as is a tomato, but a strawberry is not (because the “seeds,” which are in fact the fruits, are on the outside). Similar confusion applies to the banana; the banana “tree” botanically speaking, is an herb, as the trunk is technically a large stalk, wrapped around with leaves.

A similar legal process determined that the tomato was a vegetable.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1770: New Zealand

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks: “Tupia who was over the water by himself saw 3 Indians, who gave him a kind of longish roots about as thick as a man[']s finger and of a very good taste.”

The root was the cush-cush yam, *Dioscorea triphylla*.

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt’s journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

To the south-west of these undulations, we came to a chain of lagoons; from which several white cranes and a flight of the black Ibis rose. Brown shot one of the latter, which, when picked and cleaned for cooking, weighed three pounds and a half; it was very fat, and proved to be excellent eating. *Cytherea* shells were again found, which showed that the salt water was not very far off.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1664: London, England

From the Diary of Samuel Pepys: he has some Christening cake. “After dinner walked to my Lord’s—and there found him and much other guest(s) at table at dinner, and it seems they have christened his young son today, called him James; I got a piece of cake.”

The Christening cake at this time would have been made from sweet, rich bread dough, perhaps glazed with sugar and rose water. Baking powders were not developed and in general use until the nineteenth century.

1667: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys: he comments on English wine. “I at Sir W. Batten’s . . . and there for joy he did give the company that were there a bottle or two of his own last year’s wine growing at Walthamstow, than which the whole company said they never drank better foreign wine in their lives.”

There is evidence that wine was grown in Britain in Roman times, but the practice went into serious decline during the Middle Ages. During Pepys’s time, there was a revival of interest in wine production, and it became quite a hobby amongst gentlemen farmers such as Sir W. Batten.

It may be that climatic variation has had something to do with the erratic fortunes of the English wine industry over the centuries. In 1719, it is recorded that sixty-nine hogsheads of wine were shipped from the port of Bristol but that

about 1730, the crops began to fail, the reason assigned for it being that as spring seasons were more backward than they used to be, the grapes did not mature before winter. The circumstance is singular, as showing the change of climate that has taken place.

English wine is again undergoing a revival, and has achieved some significant successes in international competitions. It may well be that the recent trend to global warming has contributed to its success.

July 18

THE EXETER BANQUET

1850: Exeter, England

The Royal Agricultural Society of England gave Alexis Soyer the contract to cater for its annual Grand Dinner. Soyer produced a dinner almost entirely without “subtelties and French kicksaws” for the twelve hundred no-nonsense

farmers and agriculturists who sat down in a pavilion erected for the purpose. The dinner was voted an enormous success, and Soyer's reputation was cemented even further.

Baron and Saddleback of Beef *à la Magna Charta*, 33 dishes of ribs of beef, 35 dishes of roast lamb, 99 galantines of veal, 29 dishes of ham, 66 dishes of pressed beef, two rounds of Beef *à la Garrick*, 264 dishes of chicken, 33 raised French pies *à la Soyer*, 198 dishes of spring mayonnaise salad, 264 fruit tarts (cherry, gooseberry, raspberry, and currant), 198 dishes of hot potatoes, and 33 Exeter puddings. The latter had been invented by Soyer especially for the occasion.

Soyer described the cooking of the Baron and Saddleback of Beef *à la Magna Charta* in his book *The Pantropheon*, published in 1853.

For the present festival, the author, who knew well the power and efficacy of gas, wished to honour the guests with a dish of *his own*, never yet attempted, and which he has entitled the "*Baron and Saddleback of Beef à la Magna Charta*." He therefore proposed to roast a baron and saddleback of beef, weighing five hundred and thirty-five pounds, in the open air. The magistrates very willingly put the castle yard at his disposal, and it was anticipated that a large Pandemonium fire would have been seen; but, to the surprise of every one, a few bricks, without mortar, and a few sheets of iron, forming a temporary covering to a space six feet six inches in length, and three feet three inches in width, were the only appearance of an apparatus, with two hundred and sixteen very small jets of gas coming through pipes half-an-inch in diameter. It was hardly credited that such a monster joint could be properly done by such means; however, incredulity soon vanished on seeing it frizzling and steaming away; and after eight hours' roasting it was thoroughly dressed, at a cost of less than five shillings for gas.

After having allowed it to cool it was removed, and carried by eight men through the principal streets of the ancient and loyal city of Exeter, accompanied by a band of music, playing "The Roast Beef of Old England," and followed by thousands of the incredulous of the previous day. On its arrival at the pavilion it was deposited under the grand triumphal arch, designed and erected by the author; it was 17 feet high, and 10 feet wide, and composed of all the produce of agriculture and the farm.

And here is his recipe for Exeter Pudding, as given in *The Practical Housewife* (1860) by Robert Kemp Philip.

Exeter Pudding, à La Soyer

Put in a proper sized basin ten ounces of fine boiled crumbs, four ounces of sago, seven ounces of suet chopped fine, six ounces of moist sugar, the peel of half a lemon grated, a quarter pint of rum, and four eggs; stir for a few minutes with a spoon, add three more eggs, four tablespoonfuls of clouted cream, mix well: it is then ready to fill the mould. Butter the mould well, put in a handful of bread crumbs, shake the mould well till the greater part stick to the butter, then throw out the remainder, and have ready six penny sponge cakes, two ounces of ratafia, and half a pound of either raspberry or strawberry jam: cover the bottom of the mould with a layer of ratafias, and just cover them with a layer of the mixture. Cut the sponge-cake lengthways, spread each piece pretty thick with jam, put a layer in the mould, then a few ratafias, afterwards some of the mixture, and so on till the mould is full, taking care that a layer of the mixture is on the top of the pudding. It will take about forty minutes baking.

For the sauce, put in a small stewpan three tablespoonfuls of currant jelly, and two wine-glassfuls of sherry ; warm on the fire, and pour over the pudding, and serve hot.

A NEW ENGLAND CLAM FEAST

1898: USA

The Suburban Press Association of New England dined at the Hotel Pines, Revere, Massachusetts, on this day. The occasion is not known, but the meal was clearly a celebration of seafood—especially clams—and the dishes were simply prepared (mostly fried) and there were no fancy sauces or accompaniments.

Clam Chowder Fish Chowder

Steamed Clams

Baked Bluefish Fried Clams

BAKED DUTCHISH FRIED CLAMS

Fried Perch Fried Lobster

French Fried Potatoes Chips Sliced Cucumbers

Bread and Butter

Vanilla Ice Cream Strawberry Ice Cream

Assorted Cake

Tea Watermelon Coffee

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1828: North Africa

From the narrative of René Caillé's journey to Timbuktu. On his return journey from Timbuctoo, Caillié came across a Berber camp on this day and enjoyed the famous hospitality of this nomadic group.

Berber Food, and their Method of Baking Meat

This wandering and pastoral tribe subsist like the Moors, upon dates and sangleh made of barley; they often make their supper upon couscous, or barley-cake, baked upon the ashes. In the rainy season, the milk of their flocks, being then more abundant, forms a portion of their nourishment.

. . . Their cookery, like that of the Moors of el-Harib, is performed in large copper vessels, manufactured by native smiths. It is astonishing that they escape being poisoned by the verdigris, for the Moorish women are so excessively dirty that they never wash their utensils, merely rubbing off with the hand what adheres to the sides.

The Berbers encamped at Bohayara presented Sidi-Aly and our escort with a sheep, which had a particularly fine fleece and was killed by the Berbers of our company for our supper. As we had no vessel to boil it in, our guides had recourse to the ingenious expedient of picking up a number of large smooth calcareous stones, with which they formed a small oven, and heated

it with roots of *hedysarum alhagi*, the only combustible that grows in this part. The entrails of the sheep were converted into chitterlings and the carcass was cut into many small parts.

The oven when strongly heated, was carefully swept, and the pieces of mutton put in one upon another; it was then hermetically sealed with loose sand. When the meat was properly dressed, the chief of our Berbers who was a lover of justice, secured its impartial distribution by giving each of us a bit of wood, which, being duly marked, was brought to one of the Moors appointed for the purpose. He was ordered to shake them together, and taking them up at random, to place each upon a piece of the meat: thus every one was entitled to his own lot. I had also my share, for which I was solely indebted to the chief of the Berbers, who had been often indignant at the conduct of the Moors towards me. The meat was pretty good, served with cleanliness, and perfectly well dressed.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1843: USA

From the *American Journals* of Nathaniel Hawthorne:

This morning I gathered our first summer-squashes. We should have had them some days earlier, but for the loss of two of the vines, either by a disease of the roots or by those infernal bugs. We have had turnips and carrots several times. Currants are now ripe, and we are in the full enjoyment of cherries, which turn out much more delectable than I anticipated.

July 19

DINNER WITH THE LADIES

1744: London, England

The Court of Assistance and their ladies dined on this night at the Barbers and Surgeons Hall. The records show the dishes served, and the associated expenses:

- Eight Turbot, Soles, with Lobster and Shrimps.
- Seven Dishes of Venison.
- Three Hams.
- Two S^r Loynes of Beef.
- Seven Dishes of Boyld fowles three each
- Seven Marrow Puddings.
- Ten Dishes of Ducks, two each.
- Eight dishes of Turkey Pouts, two each.
- Eight Dishes of Green Peas.
- Seven Codling Tarts, Cream^d
- The Musickes Dinner.
- Wood and Coales
- Cooks and Laborers

Agreed for Twenty-Nine pounds.

The dinner would have been served in two courses, each with a mixture of dishes. The progression of dishes that we now consider usual began to be used in the early 1800s, although it continued to be used alongside the “old” method for almost the whole of the nineteenth century. The former method came to be called *service à la Française*, the modern method, *service à la Russe*.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1938: Soap for Fluffier Cake Mixes

The Proctor & Gamble Company of Cincinnati was granted Patent No. 2,123,880 for “Compositions of Matter” on this day. The patent application said,

The object of our invention is to produce cakes of unusually high sugar content and of improved appearance and eating qualities, particularly with respect to a uniformly light and tender texture. Moistness, sweetness, and tenderness are highly prized in cakes and are obtained in increasing degree as the proportion of sugar to flour is increased and moisture is added. However, as these changes in the cake formula are made, the finished cake becomes smaller in volume until a point is reached when the cake made with the usual commercial ingredients falls at the end of baking and is thus “sad” and a complete failure. . . . By the practice of our invention we overcome or in large measure counteract this tendency of cakes to fall as the proportion of sugar and flour to the accompanying moisture content are increased, and we make possible unusually high rates of sugar to flour without sacrifice of the light texture, which is essential.

The method proposed involved uses of shortening comprising monoglyceride and/or diglyceride, and have also shown that further improvement in the volume and texture of such cake is obtained by including a small quantity of soap in the mix. In such cakes almost the maximum effect of soap is obtained by the use of surprisingly small quantities, so that a quantity of soap equal to about .025 per cent of the weight of total cake batter is of considerable value, the further improvement due to larger quantities is of little practical importance. . . . The soap ought to be prepared from strictly edible fats or oils and should be free from objectionable flavor.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769: Polynesia

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks:

“*Huahine*” The Island of Huahine differs scarce at all from that of Otahite either in its productions or in the customs of the people. . . . Of the Cocoa nut kernels they make a food which they call Poe by scraping them fine and mixing them with yams also scrapd; these are put into a wooden trough and hot stones laid among them, by which means a kind of Oily hasty pudding is made which our people relishd very well especialy fryd.

1819: USA

Alonzo Delano (1809–1874) traveled overland to California in 1849–1851.

Through burning sand, and in dense clouds of dust, we pursued our way, with the scenery of the plain but little varied. . . . After supper I went to the river, and descending an almost perpendicular rocky bank, I found, growing from a little beach, some of the finest red currants I ever saw. They were like the English currant, nearly as large as a cherry, and grew on bushes at least ten feet high. Their flavor was excellent, and I enjoyed a feast.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1668: England

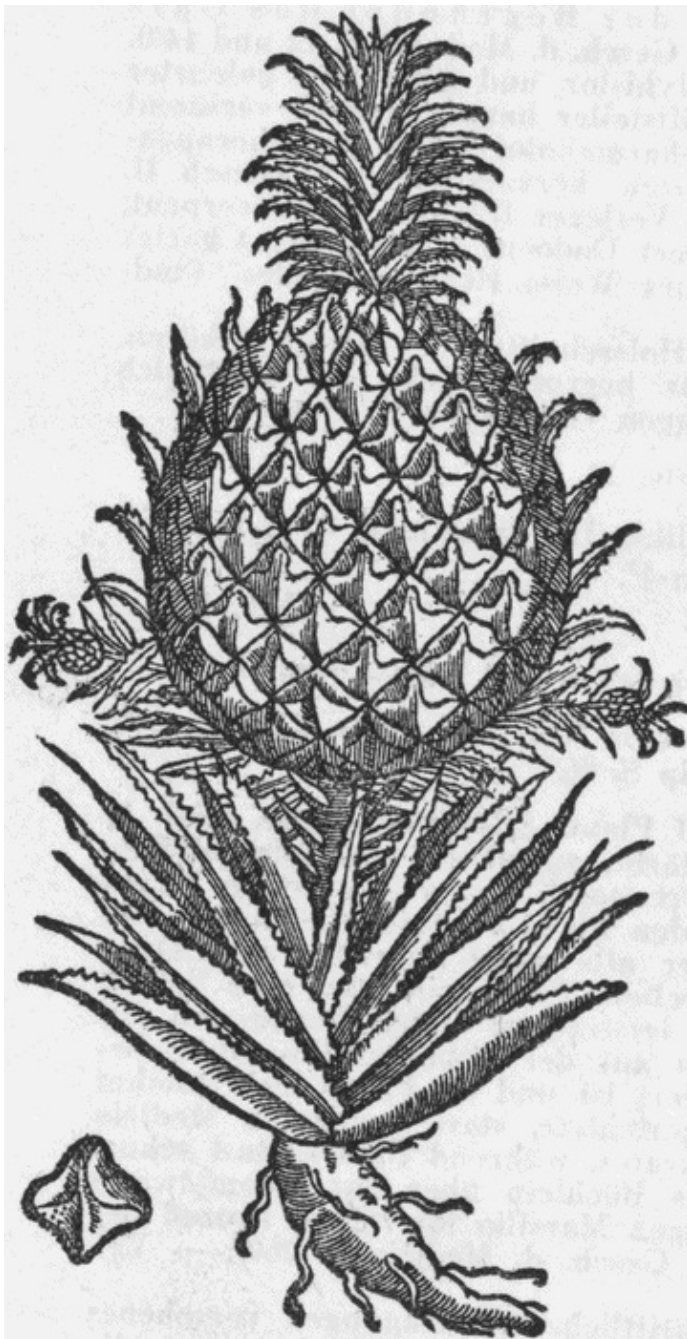
From the Diary of John Evelyn: he tastes pineapple for the first time.

Standing by his Majesty at dinner in the Presence, there was of that rare fruit call'd the King-pine, grown in the Barbadoes and the West indies, the first of them I have ever seene. His Majesty having cut it up was pleas'd to give me a piece off his owne plate to taste of, but in my opinion it falls short of those ravishing varieties of deliciousness describ'd in Capt. Ligon's history and others.

Pineapples (a New World fruit) would not survive the long voyage from the tropics, so very few Europeans had tasted them in the seventeenth century. Richard Ligon, to whom Evelyn refers, went to Barbados in 1647, and he was lyrical in his description of the fruit there in his book *The True and Exact History of the Island of Barbados*. He says of the Queen Pine,

The rinde being taken off, we lay the fruit in a dish and cut it in slices, halfe an inch thick and as the knife goes in, there issues out of the pores of the fruit, a liquor, cleer as Rock-water, neer about six spoonfulls, which is eaten with a spoon; and as you taste it, you finde it in a high degree delicious, but so milde, as you can distinguish no taste all; but when you bite a piece of the fruit, it is so violently sharp, as you would think it would fetch all the skin off your mouth, but, before your tongue have made a second triall upon your palat, you shall perceive such a sweetnesse to follow as perfectly to cure that vigorous sharpness and between these two extreams, of sharp

and sweet, lies the relish and flavor of all fruits that are excellent, and those tastes will change and flow so fast upon your palat, as your fancy can hardly keep way with them, to distinguish one from the other: and this at least to a tenth examination, for so long as the Eccho will last.



Pineapple, early illustration.

Pineapple plant woodcut from Jacques Dalechamps's *Historia Generalis Plantarum*, Lyon 1587. BPA2# 569

1875: Australia

Charles William Bowly was born in England in 1844 and sailed for Australia in 1873. On this date he wrote a letter to his family from Mount Cornish, the two thousand square mile sheep and cattle station in the state of Queensland, and he discussed the food situation.

Ever since I last wrote home, I have been at Ambo, the out station I mentioned in my last; having come in here for rations today I take the opportunity of writing. . . . I am pleased to tell you that tho' I have been roughing it during the cold weather here, my health in general has been good, considering I have had no vegetables for 2 months & most of the time living on salt beef & damper. One poor fellow at our camp was very ill with scurvy, & had to come in here for fresh vegetables and milk. The work has been pretty severe lately; constant riding & yard work, that is draughting, branding & square tailing cattle as fast as we can bring them in. For my-self I should be rather glad of a change in here, if it was only to get a bed in a house & a comfortable place to sit down to ones meals, instead of sitting down round an open wood fire, on short blocks of wood (when you can get them) with our knees almost up to our faces; a slice of damper & beef; a pocket knife & pint pot of tea in hand.

July 20

SPARROW ON THE MENU

1887: USA

The *New York Times* ran an article about sparrows as a substitute for reed birds.

English Sparrows are being properly appreciated. Hundreds of them are now caught by enterprising people for sale to certain restaurants where reed birds are in demand. A German woman on Third Avenue has three traps set

every day, and she catches probably seventy five a week.

They are cooked and served to her boarders the same as reed birds and are declared quite as great a delicacy. This German woman bastes them, leaving the little wooden skewer in the bird when served. They are cooked with a bit of bacon. She tempts them with oats, and after the catch they are fed a while with boiled oaten meal. She sprinkles oaten meal in the back yard also, and thereby fattens the free birds. The females are the choice meat. The males can be told by the circle of white feathers at the neck. The females are as plain as Quakeresses. So soon as it becomes known that the Sparrow is a table bird their number will rapidly grow less

People don't like to experiment, but when it is discovered that the Sparrow has been declared good by those upon whom they have been tried, no boarding house meal will be deemed in good form unless a dish of fat Sparrows adorns it. Sparrow pie is a delicacy fit to set before a king.

FOOD & WAR

1918: Britain, World War I

The *Guardian* carried the following article on this day, about the rationing order in relation to public meals.

The Rationing Order: Changes for Public Meals

The Food Controller has now signed the Rationing Order, 1918. The main features of the new order have already been made public, in connection with the issue of the new national ration books. As regards household consumption, the changes made by the order are confined to matters of detail.

The rationed foods are—sugar, butter and margarine, meat of all kinds, and lard (now rationed for the first time). Edible fats other than lard, butter, and margarine (such as dripping and cocoa butter) are ration-free to the general public and in residential establishments, but are rationed in bulk to catering establishments and institutions.

The Public Meals Order is, so far as Great Britain is concerned, absorbed in the new Rationing Order subject to certain important changes, one of

the new rationing order, subject to certain important changes, one of which provides for a considerable modification in the scales of consumption in catering establishments, especially for fats.

SOCIAL FORCES AT WORK

1943: Sydney, Australia

An article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* described the ongoing bakers strike.

Bread Talks Fail: Two-day Scarcity Expected

A conference called by the Minister for Labour, Mr Knight, yesterday failed to reach agreement in the bread strike. Bread is expected to be in short supply in Sydney to-day and tomorrow. Tomorrow is a bakers' holiday, and double supplies must be baked to-day.

The position has been made more difficult by the union decision to withdraw members from factories which had been observing the interim award. One hundred men who had been working under the interim award stopped work yesterday in accordance with this decision.

The union decided on Sunday that they should be withdrawn because, it was alleged, they were being asked to supply bread for other bakeries. The union contended that in this way they were "aiding and abetting" the employers.

The strike is now in its second week. Members of the disputes committee of the Labour Council have been placed in charge of the dispute.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769: Polynesia

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks:

At noon today come to an anchor at Ulhietea in a bay Calld by the natives Oapoa. . . . We saw also Cocoa nut trees the stemms of which were hung round with nutts so that no part of them could be seen, these we were told were nut there that they might drv a little and be nrenard for making noe

were put there that they might dry a little and be prepared for making por.

1793: Africa

From Mungo Park's journals of his expedition into Africa in 1793. He was imprisoned by the Moors in March, but managed to escape in July.

In the morning I endeavoured, both by entreaties and threats, to procure some victuals from the dooty, but in vain. I even begged some corn from one of his female slaves, as she was washing it at the well, and had the mortification to be refused. However, when the dooty was gone to the fields, his wife sent me a handful of meal, which I mixed with water, and drank for breakfast. About eight o'clock I departed from Doolinkeaboo, and at noon stopped a few minutes at a large korree, where I had some milk given me by the Foulahs; and hearing that two negroes wore going from thence to Segoo, I was happy to have their company, and we set out immediately. About four o'clock we stopped at a small village, where one of the negroes met with an acquaintance, who invited us to a sort of public entertainment, which was conducted with more than common propriety. A dish, made of sour milk and meal, called *Sinkatoo*, and beer made from their corn, as distributed with great liberality, and the women were admitted into the society—a circumstance I had never before observed in Africa. There was no compulsion—every one was at liberty to drink as he pleased—they nodded to each other when about to drink, and Mi setting down the calabash, commonly said Berka. ("Thank you.") Both men and women appeared to be somewhat intoxicated, but they were far from being quarrelsome.

1840: Australia

From the journal of Edward John Eyre (1815–1901) on an expedition into the inland of Central Australia:

Before sunset, I got a shot at a kangaroo with my rifle, which, though severely wounded, gave me a long chase before I could capture it; this furnished us with a welcome and luxurious repast. We had been so long living upon nothing but the bush baked bread, called damper (so named, I imagine, from its heavy, sodden character), with the exception of the one or two occasions upon which the native boy had added an opossum to our fare, that we were delighted to obtain a supply of animal food for a change, and

that we were delighted to obtain a supply of animal food for a change; and the boy, to shew how he appreciated our good luck, ate several pounds of it for his supper. Our horses were equally fortunate with ourselves, for we obtained both good grass and water for them.

1902: Arctic Region

Knut Rasmussen (1879–1933) was a Danish anthropologist and explorer of the North polar regions.

Towards morning it cleared up; we sprang half-naked about the rocks, and dried our clothes and sleeping-bags. We made a little tea, and boiled some seal's skin - starvation fare. During the storm the dogs broke in and ate our meat. We set out again towards evening. Towards camping time, shot three seals; men and dogs ate what they could. Sweet sleep followed.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1662: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

But that which troubles me most is that it has rained all this morning so furiously that I fear my house is all over water, and with that expectation I rose and went into my house and find that it is as wet as the open street, and that there is not one dry-footing above nor below in my house. So I fitted myself for dirt, and removed all my books to the office and all day putting up and restoring things, it raining all day long as hard within doors as without. At last to dinner, we had a calf's head and bacon at my chamber at Sir W. Pen's, and there I and my wife concluded to have her go and her two maids and the boy, and so there shall be none but Will and I left at home.

1818: Scotland

John Keats, on holiday in Scotland, wrote to his brother Thomas:

For the past two days we have been so badly accommodated more particularly in coarse food that I have not been at all in cue to write. . . . We have lost the sight of white bread entirely. . . . Now we had eaten nothing

but Eggs all day—about 10 a piece and they had become sickening. . . . To day we had a small Chicken and even a good bottle of Port but all together the food is too coarse. . . . I fell upon a bit of white Bread to day like a Sparrow—it was very fine—I cannot manage the cursed Oatcake.

FOOD & RELIGION

Eighth Century: Britain

The Céli Dé (Gaelic, meaning clients or companions of God) were members of a strictly ascetic medieval monastic order that arose in Ireland in the eighth century. They followed the rule of St. Máel Ruain of Tallaght, whose feast day is July 20.

The rules for St. Máel Ruain as set down for the monastery were these:

1. It is usual to make a brew of thick milk, with honey added on the eves of the chief festivals, namely, Christmas and the two Easters. It is not lawful to make a feast or drink beer on these nights, because of going to Communion the next day.
2. On the Sundays of Great Lent a draught of milk is allowed to those undergoing strict penance. A selann at night is, however, not forbidden on these Sundays. Penitents get no butter before or after, but only on Saint Patrick's Day, and further, when this feast falls on a Friday or Wednesday, a draught of milk is what is taken on it. On a Sunday, or on a festal day if it falls otherwise than on a fast-day, a selann (i.e. a half-quantity) is taken. Of bread the Céli Dé allow no increase, even on the festivals, but only of drink and of condiment and other things.
3. If there chance to be any kale, the quantum of bread is not diminished, because they regard kale as a condiment, and it is dressed with milk, not butter. As for a piece of fish, or a little biestings or cheese, or a hard boiled egg or apples, none of these things diminish the quantum of bread, so long as not more than a little of any of them is eaten, nor all of them together. Of apples, five or six along with the bread are enough, if they are large; while if they are small, twelve are sufficient.
4. Three or four heads of leeks are allowed. Curds and whey are not eaten

by them, but are used to make cheese. Flummery is made for them, and is not forbidden, provided that no rennet is put into it. The reason why it is not forbidden may be that it counts as bread. Whey of curds is not drunk alone, but is mixed with small curds as well.

5. The relaxation at Easter permits eggs and lard and the flesh of deer and wild swine.
6. It is usual to lay additional penance on cooks and milkers and scullions on account of spilling the produce, both milk and corn.
7. Ye may have flesh meats in Great Lent, when other things are scarce, yet unless lives are in danger, it is better to keep the fast.
8. On principal feast-days which fall on a Thursday or Tuesday outside Lent a half-selann is allowed, with a bochtan [lit.: pauper, i.e., small amount] of beer or whey-water. If, however, a sip of whey-water or a goblet of beer is not to be had, then a small mess of gruel is made instead, that is, a quarter ration. When there [are] chances to be a goblet of beer, it is not drunk at a draught, though they may be thirsty, but in sips, because these quench thirst, and thou hast not less sense of pleasure from them in thy drink.
9. No selann [special dispensation] of butter is made, but instead of them a draught of whey-water is taken on the evening of a Monday or Wednesday or Friday or Saturday, even outside of Lent, or on a principal feast-day; but the feast-day which comes on a Monday is transferred to Tuesday, on which comes on Wednesday is transferred to Thursday, and one which comes on a Friday is transferred to the Tuesday following.
10. To a draught of new milk, if there be no other milk [mixed with it], a fourth part of water is added.

July 21

A GRAND BALL

1814: London, England

The Prince Regent (the future George IV) held a grand ball at Carlton House, as a tribute to Wellington's victory over Napoleon at Waterloo. Lady Harriot Frampton attended the ball, and described the fine supper table in her diary.

The supper laid out in one room for the Queen was very handsome, as the ornaments were quite beautiful. There were fifty covers, and the plateau down the middle of the table was covered with exquisite groups in silver gilt. The centre group was above three feet high, and each one of the figures was so beautifully executed that they might have been ornaments in a drawing-room, and everything else, even the salt-cellars, was in the most excellent taste. All was in gold or silver gilt, which made the silver plate, set out in the deep-recessed windows, look cold and poor, although in reality it was very massive and handsome.

The plates only were of china, and I recognized them as a set of the finest Sevres porcelain which Lady Auckland had once shown me at Beckenham, as having been a present from Louis XVI to the late Lord Auckland, when he was Ambassador at Paris, and I regretted that they should have been obliged to part with them. Each plate had a large bird painted in the centre of it.

FOOD & WAR

1946: Britain, Post–World War II

The *Guardian* carried the following article from “our Food Correspondent” on this day:

Bread Rationing from July 21st

The introduction of bread and flour rationing from July 21 was announced by the Food Minister in the House of Commons yesterday. The ration will be on a varying scale for differing types of workers and children of different ages. For the ordinary adult it will be nine ounces of bread per day, part of which may be taken in flour or cakes.

The Food Minister's announcement was described as “one of the gravest I have ever heard in time of peace” by Mr. Churchill, who demanded that figures of stocks and movements of cereals should be produced by the

Government to justify "this extreme measure."

Mr. Strachey announced that the meat ration would be increased by 2d. a week from the same date.

Ironically, bread was not rationed in Britain during the war, but rationing became necessary afterward because of the huge commitment to provide for war-ravaged Europe. Bread rationing remained in force for two years.

CAROLINA RICE

1699: England & America

In a letter from William Thornburgh, one of the Lords Proprietors of Carolina, to William Poppel, secretary of His Majesty's Commissioners for Trade and Plantations, dated July 21, 1699, he says,

I have herewith sent you a sample of our Carolina rice that the Rt. Hon. the Lords Commissrs. of Trade & Plantations may see what a staple the Province of Carolina may be capable of furnishing Europe withall. The Grocers do assure me its better than any Foreign Rice by at least 8s. the hundred weight, & wee can have it brought home for less than 4s. pr. tonn. wch. is not dear.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1605: Canada

The first written mention of the Jerusalem artichoke occurs in the journal of Samuel de Champlain, the French explorer and navigator who founded the settlement of Quebec.

On reaching the harbor of Nauset on Cape Cod, Champlain wrote,

[W]ent about a league along the coast. Before reaching their cabins, we entered a field planted with Indian corn, in the manner before described. The corn was in flower, and five and a half feet high. There was some less advanced, which they plant later. We saw many Brazilian beans, and many squashes of various sizes, very good for eating; some tobacco, and roots

which they cultivate, the latter having the taste of an artichoke. . . . There were also several fields entirely uncultivated, the land being allowed to remain fallow. When they wish to plant it, they set fire to the weeds, and then work it over with their wooden spades.

1860: Australia

From the journals of John McDouall Stuart's fourth explorations into the centre of the continent:

Anna's Reservoir, Reynolds Range. I shall remain here till Monday morning to rest the horses. . . . For the last fourteen days we have been getting a quantity of the native cucumber and other vegetables, which have done me a great deal of good; the pains in my limbs and back are much relieved, and I trust will soon go away altogether if these vegetables hold out. We boil and eat the cucumbers with a little sugar, and in this way they are very good, and resemble the gooseberry; we have obtained from one plant upwards of two gallons of them, averaging from one to two inches in length, and an inch in breadth.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1754: England

From Henry Fielding's *The Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon*. They are still waiting for the wind so they can set sail.

This day, having paid our taxes of yesterday, we were permitted to regale ourselves with more venison. Some of this we would willingly have exchanged for mutton; but no such flesh was to be had nearer than Portsmouth, from whence it would have cost more to convey a joint to us than the freight of a Portugal ham from Lisbon to London amounts to.

July 22

FOOD & WAR

1789: French Revolution

Eight days after the storming of the Bastille, the price of the four-pound loaf of bread was reduced from fourteen and a half to thirteen and a half sous. Most of the general public unrest at this time and up to the day of the Women's March to Versailles (October 5) was related to bread shortages and prices.

FOOD & THE LAW

1822: Britain

The Bread Act was passed, replacing the Assize of Bread and Ale, which had been in force since 1266. The full title of the act was as follows:

An Act to repeal the Acts now in force relating to Bread to be sold in the City of London and the Liberties thereof, and within the Weekly Bills of Mortality, and Ten Miles of the Royal Exchange; and to provide other Regulations for the Making and Sale of Bread, and preventing the Adulteration of Meal, Flour and Bread, within the Limits aforesaid.

The regulations are too lengthy and specific to reproduce in their entirety here, but a couple of examples will show their range.

After over seven hundred years, bakers were now allowed to make bread any weight or size they saw fit:

And be it further enacted, That it shall and may be lawful for the several Bakers or Sellers of Bread within the Limits aforesaid, to make and sell, or offer for Sale, in his, her or their Shop, or to deliver to his, her or their Customer or Customers, Bread made of such Weight or Size as such Bakers or Sellers of Bread shall think fit; any Law or Usage to the contrary notwithstanding.

Bread containing meal other than that derived from wheat had to be specially marked:

And be it further enacted, That every Person who shall make for Sale, or sell or expose for Sale, within the Limits aforesaid, any Bread, made wholly or partially of the Meal or Flour of any other Sort of Corn or Grain than

Wheat, or of the Meal or Flour of any Peas or Beans, shall cause all such Bread to be marked with a large Roman M; and if any Person shall at any Time, within the Limits aforesaid, make or sell, or expose for Sale, any such Bread without such Mark as hereinbefore directed, then and in every such case, every Person so offending shall, upon Conviction in manner hereinafter mentioned, forfeit and pay for every Pound Weight of such Bread, and so in Proportion for any less Quantity, which shall be so made for Sale or sold or exposed for Sale, without being so marked as aforesaid, any Sum not exceeding Ten Shillings, as the Magistrate or Magistrates, Justice or Justices, before whom such Conviction shall take place, shall from time to time order and adjudge.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1873: France

Louis Pasteur was granted Patent No. 141,072 for an “Improvement in the Manufacture and Preservation of Beer and in the Treatment of Yeast and Wort.” His improvement was intended to produce a pure yeast and to reduce spoilage of beer. This was one of the first food-production-related patents.

The variations in the condition of brewers’ yeast, worts, and beer, are caused by the presence of microscopic organisms, the development and multiplication of which are accompanied by the formation of substances which change the properties of the wort, beer, or yeast, and also prevent it keeping beyond a certain time. These organisms exist in varying proportions in cooled worts, as prepared by the ordinary processes, as well as in yeast and beer. . . . The object of this invention is to eliminate and prevent the multiplication of these organisms. . . .

The employment of pure yeast in the above process is of prime necessity—that is to say, yeast deprived of the germs by which the beer is liable to be affected.

All kinds of beer manufactured by this process may be preserved without the aid of ice, and may be made in hot as well as cold climates, as summer as in winter.

As there is no liability of the worts undergoing any change a very small

quantity of pure yeast will be sufficient to ferment it.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1836: USA

From missionary Narcissa Whitman's journal of her journey in 1836 from New York, across the Rocky Mountains, to Oregon and beyond: "On the 22nd we had a tedious ride, as we traveled till half-past four P.M. I thought of mother's bread, as a child would, but did not find it on the table, I should relish it extremely well; have been living on buffalo meat until I am cloyed with it."

1840: Australia

From the journal of Edward John Eyre (1815–1901) on an expedition into the inland of Central Australia:

After breakfast I had all the stores reweighed, and examined the supplies sent us in the WATERWITCH, which consisted chiefly of flour, biscuit, sugar, tea, salt pork, soap, tobacco, salt, canvas, *etc.* besides many little luxuries which the kindness of the Governor, and the consideration of our many friends had added to the list.

The men during my absence, having been living entirely upon salt pork, to economize the sheep, were glad to receive the kangaroo which I brought home with me.

Having inspected the stores, the whole party were put upon their travelling rations, and the first week's allowance was issued to each, consisting of ten pounds of meat, seven pounds of biscuit or flour, a quarter of a pound of tea, a pound and a half of sugar, a quarter of a pound of soap, and the same quantity of tobacco.

Provisions of different kinds were then weighed out, headed up in casks, and buried in the hole dug by the men during my absence, to wait our return, if ever it should be our lot to reach the place again. The remainder were all properly packed up, and the drays loaded and arranged for moving on.

1862: Africa

John Hanning Speke, from his *Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile*:

In the evening I strolled in the antelope parks, enjoying the scenery and sport excessively. A noble buck nsunnu, standing by himself, was the first thing seen on this side, though a herd of hertebeests were grazing on the Usoga banks. One bullet rolled my fine friend over, but the rabble looking on no sooner saw the hit than[sic] they rushed upon him and drove him off, for he was only wounded. A chase ensued, and he was tracked by his blood when a pongo (bush box) was started and divided the party. It also brought me to another single buck nsunnu, which was floored at once, and left to be carried home by some of my men in company with Waganda, whilst I went on, shot a third nsunnu buck, and tracked him by his blood till dark, for the bullet had pierced his lungs and passed out on the other side. Failing to find him on the way home, I shot, besides florikan and guinea-chicks, a wonderful goatsucker, remarkable for the exceeding length of some of its feathers floating out far beyond the rest in both wings. Returning home, I found the men who had charge of the dead buck all in a state of excitement; they no sooner removed his carcass, than two lions came out of the jungle and lapped his blood. All the Waganda ran away at once; but my braves feared my answer more than the lions, and came off safely with the buck on their shoulders.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

1777: England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde. He noted a local crime, and the community response, in his diary on this day.

In the afternoon I walked down to Charles Clarke's and bought me 20 yds of Huccaback Cloth for kitchen Table Clothes in Norfolk $\frac{3}{4}$ wide at 1/1 per yd. . . . Robert Biggen for stealing Potatoes was this afternoon whipp'd thro' the streets of Cary by the Hangman at the end of a Cart. [H]e being an old offender there was a Collection of 0. 17. 6 given to the Hangman to do him justice. . . . For my part I would not contribute one Farthing to it.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1997: Himalaya

Alan Hinkes was a mountaineer attempting to climb the fourteen highest peaks in the world when he suffered a back injury and had to be airlifted off his ninth mountain—Nanga Parbat. The severe back strain happened while he was eating a *chapatti* (thin unleavened bread)—some flour on the surface made him sneeze, and he experienced sudden very severe back pain. The following day (the 22nd) he wrote in his journal,

Wet morning. Back tiny bit better. I can crawl and stagger short distances with 2 ski sticks for support.

At evening meal I sneeze and scream in agony as my back spasms. It is worse than ever and I cannot even hobble around now. Bad night, little sleep because of the pain. Torrential rain in the night.

July 23

ENTERTAINING THE FRENCH NAVY

1868: Auckland, New Zealand

A very *recherché* dinner was offered to the officers of the French navy by a British regiment stationed in New Zealand on this day. The event was reported a few days later in the *Daily Southern Cross*.

Complimentary Dinner to Officers of H.I.M.S. “Dorade”

On Thursday evening the officers of the 2nd battalion of the 18th Royal Irish entertained Commander Villemsens and officers of the French ship *Dorade*, at present in harbour, to dinner at their mess-rooms, Karangahape Road. The dinner was served in a most *recherché* style by Mr. Gallagher, caterer to the mess. The bill of fare was as follows:—Mock turtle soup, boiled mullet, sirloin beef, lamb cutlets, sausages à la pomme de terre,

curried chicken, braised turkey, ham, rissoles of veal and ham, devilled kidney, fricasseed turkey, fried garfish, roast saddle of mutton, roast pheasants, curaçoa jelly, tartlets, apple tart, Italian cream, pineapple jelly, Cape gooseberry tart, anchovy toasts; a superb dessert of all fruits in season. The band, under Mr. Quinn, performed a choice selection of music. The usual toasts of the Queen and Royal Family were duly honoured, as also the toast of H I.M. the Emperor of the French, and appropriate tunes played by the band. The proceedings terminated at a late hour, all having thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

SOCIAL FORCES AT WORK

1918: Japan

A series of riots was triggered in Japan during the period of July to September 1918 by a huge increase in the price of rice—an absolute staple to the Japanese, especially in rural areas. The first incident occurred in the small fishing town of Uozu, Toyama Prefecture, on July 23, 1918. An initially peaceful protest rapidly escalated and became violent, with armed clashes and arson occurring. By mid-September over 623 incidents had occurred right across Japan, involving over 2 million protesters. Of the 25,000 people arrested, 8,200 were convicted of various crimes, and several received the death penalty.

See August 17.

THE CUSTOM OF THE SEA

1884: Britain, *Regina v Dudley and Stephens*

An incident of cannibalism that occurred on this day led to a famous case that gripped the British public's attention and established a legal precedent that necessity is no defense against murder.

Captain Tom Dudley was hired to deliver the yacht *Mignonette* to her new owner in Australia. Three others were hired as crew—Edwin Stephens, Edmund Brooks, and seventeen-year-old Richard Parker as cabin boy. On July 5 the yacht foundered in severe weather, and sank within minutes, the men only just managing to escape in a flimsy lifeboat with only a few instruments, two tins of

turnips, and no water. They opened the first tin of turnips in July, and caught a turtle a few days later, which yielded a few pounds of meat apiece, and the second tin of turnips was broached sometime between July 15 and 17. They had still not obtained water, and were drinking their own urine by this time. By July 21 the men had been discussing for several days the drawing of lots to see who would be sacrificed in order to feed his comrades. It was alleged that Dudley and Stephens instead made the decision to kill Parker, who may have been drinking seawater, as he appeared to be dying anyway. This they did on July 23 (or perhaps 24), all three men surviving on his flesh until they were rescued four days later.

The three men were arrested and charged with murder shortly after their return to England, but they claimed they were acting according to “the Custom of the Sea”—a set of customs said to be practiced by the officers and men aboard ships in the open sea, in conditions outside normal maritime law. Legal arguments were heard from all sides, but it became clear that public opinion in Britain and around the world was firmly behind the defendants. Dudley and Stephens were convicted and sentenced to death, but this was commuted to six months imprisonment.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt’s journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

Charley, Brown, and John, shot fourteen ducks, and increased this number towards evening to forty-six ducks, five recurvirostris, one small red-shank, and two spoon-bills: the latter were particularly fat, and, when ready for the spit, weighed better than three pounds; the black ducks weighed a pound and three-quarters. The *Malacorhynchus* was small, but in good condition, and the fat seemed to accumulate particularly in the skin of the neck.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1754: England

Henry Fielding, in *The Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon*. They were hoping for enough wind to sail at last.

Here, about seven in the evening, before which time we could not procure it, we sat down to regale ourselves with some roasted venison, which was much better dressed than we imagined it would be, and an excellent cold pasty which my wife had made at Ryde, and which we had reserved uncut to eat on board our ship.

In the days before refrigeration, one way of preserving meat was to bake it in a thick, hard pastry “coffin” into which melted fat was poured through a hole at the top, to exclude all air. Provided that the pie or pasty was kept dry, and did not crack, the contents would keep for a very long time. One recipe from 1695 for a boar pie sealed with butter notes that it “will, if it be not set in a very moist place, keep a whole Year.” Large, robust pies such as these were sent around the country as gifts, or kept—as in Fielding’s case—for use on voyages or other long journeys. The idea gives us the horrors these days, and would certainly not be sanctioned by any health authorities anywhere, but it was very commonly done in the past, so we must suppose that it did not frequently cause illness or death.

July 24

“ST. JAMES’S CAKE”

1849: England

Alexis Soyer catered for a Christening dinner this day, which was reported a few days later in the *Morning Post*.

A series of festivities are taking place at the seat of Sir George Chetwynd, Bart. Grendon Hall, Atherstone, Warwickshire, to celebrate the christening of Sir George’s infant grandson. The christening took place on Tuesday [24th] at Grendon church, and in the evening a grand dinner was given in celebration of the event, under the able superintendence of Mr. Alexis Soyer. . . . [T]he dinner, which was provided for twenty persons, was of a very *recherché* description.

It was St. James' Eve, and Soyer created a "St. James Cake"—"the first ever made"—for the occasion (perhaps the infant was named James). The recipe appears in his book *The Modern Housewife*, in one of the letters to the fictional "Eloise" in which he suggests that the idea had come to him in a dream.

St. James's Cake

Put one pound of very fresh butter in a good-size kitchen basin, and with the right hand work it up well till it forms quite a white cream; then add one pound powdered sugar, mix well, add ten eggs by degrees; put to dry a pound and a quarter of flour, which mix as lightly as possible with it; branch and cut in slices two ounces of pistachios, two ditto of green preserved angelica, add two liqueur glasses of noyveau, two drops of essence of vanilla; whip a gill and a half of cream till very thick, mix lightly with a wooden spoon, have a mould made the shape of the drawing, put it in, and send to the baker; it will take about one hour and a quarter to bake; ornament as represented in the subjoined cut:

THE WAY TO PEACE AND PLENTY

1795: Britain

An article in the *Times* on this day gave a list of "rules" for the rich and for the poor by which "peace and plenty" could be achieved, most of which relate to the economical use of food. The stimulus for the piece is not noted, but there were serious wheat shortages at the time due to a series of poor harvests. The likelihood that this is at least part of the explanation is reinforced by the half-dozen recipes included, which are all wheatless.

The Way to Peace and Plenty

Rules for the Rich

1. Abolish gravy soups, and second courses.
2. Buy no starch when wheat is dear.
3. Destroy all useless dogs.

4. Give no dog, or other animal, the smallest bit of bread or meat.
5. Save all your skim-milk carefully, and give it all to the poor, or sell it at a cheap rate.
6. Make broth, rice pudding, &c, for the poor, and teach them to make such things.
7. Go to church yourselves, and take care your servants go constantly.
8. Look into the management of your own families, and visit your poor neighbours.
9. Prefer those poor who keep steadily to their work, and go constantly to church, and give nothing to those who are idle, and riotous, or keep useless dogs.
10. Buy no weighing meat, or gravy beef: if the rich would buy only the prime pieces, the poor could get the others cheap.

Rules for the Poor

1. Keep steady to your work, and never change masters, if you can help it.
2. Go to no gin-shop, or alehouse: but lay out all your earnings in food, and cloaths, for yourself, and your family: and try to lay up a little for rent, and rainy days.
3. Avoid bad company.
4. Keep no dogs: for they rob your children, and your neighbours.
5. Go constantly to church, and carry your wives, and children, with you, and God will bless you.
6. Be civil to your superiors, and they will be kind to you.
7. Learn to make broth, milk pottage, rice-pudding, &c. One pound of meat, in both, will go further than two pounds boiled or roasted.

8. Be quiet, and contented, and never steal, or swear, or you will never thrive.

Rice Pudding

Half a pound of rice, two quarts of skim milk, and three ounces of brown sugar, well baked, make an excellent pudding. The expense is about sevenpence (if you buy the milk and pay for the baking) and it will make a good meal for a family of seven or eight.

Water gruel

A large spoonful of oatmeal put into a pint of hot water, boil it gently half an hour; add a little sugar or salt as you please.

Milk Porridge

A large spoonful of oatmeal put into a quarter of a pint of hot water, boil it gently, add a pint of skim-milk and just boil it up.

WALRUS MEAT IN THE NEWS

1998: Canada

The *Nunatsiaq News* (Nunavut Edition) carried an article on this day on the health hazards of walrus meat, and some efforts being made in Kuukkuq, the largest northern Inuit community in Quebec.

KUUIJUAQ—The Nunavik Research Centre is counting on walrus hunters to help stop the spread of trichinosis, which is caused by a tiny parasite found in walrus meat that causes serious illness in humans.

“It’s a unique program,” Dr. Daniel Leclerc, a veterinarian at the research centre, said.

Traditionally, when hunters return home, they share their catch with the community and everyone rushes down to the beach to sample fresh meat.

But eating raw or fermented walrus can be risky, as the community of Salluit discovered back in 1987 when 41 people became seriously ill with

the muscle pain, diarrhea, vomiting and swelling associated with trichinosis.

Thanks to the research centre's Trichinosis Infection Prevention Program, which started in 1992, hunters may now send in parts of the walrus for laboratory tests. The tests detect parasite infestation before any of the meat is distributed and eaten.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1585: At Sea

From *The First Voyage of Master John Davis, Undertaken in June, 1585, for the Discovery of the North–West Passage*, written by John James Marchant, servant to the Worshipful Master William Sanderson:

The 24th [July], the wind being very fair at east, we coasted the land, which did lie east and west, not being able to come near the shore by reason of the great quantity of ice. At this place, because the weather was somewhat cold by reason of the ice, and the better to encourage our men, their allowance was increased. The captain and the master took order that every mess, being five persons, should have half a pound of bread and a can* of beer every morning to breakfast.

*This was a measure, not a metal can; canning of foodstuffs was not possible until the technological developments of the early nineteenth century.

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhard's journal of his overland expedition in Australia. They had managed to kill several emus on this day.

Upon making our camp, we cut part of their meat into slices, and dried it on green hide ropes: the bones, heads and necks were stewed: formerly, we threw the heads, gizzards, and feet away, but necessity had taught us economy; and, upon trial, the feet of young emus was found to be as good and tender as cow-heel. I collected some salt on the dry salt ponds, and added it to our stew, but my companions scarcely cared for it, and almost preferred the stew without it. The addition, however, rendered the soup far

more savoury, at least to my palate.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1732: England

The cleric and theologian John Wesley received a response from his mother on this day to his questions on child rearing. Susanna Wesley should be expected to be an expert, having borne nineteen children, ten of whom survived. In the extract below, she discusses behavior at the table. She was held in great affection by her family, in spite of being a harsh disciplinarian—and in today's terms, abusive.

According to your desire, I have collected the principal rules I observed in educating my family.

The children were always put into a regular method of living. . . . When turned a year old (and some before), they were taught to fear the rod and to cry softly. . . . As soon as they were grown pretty strong, they were confined to three meals a day. At dinner their little table and chairs were set by ours, where they could be observed; and they were suffered to eat and drink as much as they would but not to call for anything. If they wanted aught, they used to whisper to the maid which attended them, who came and spoke to me; and as soon as they could handle a knife and fork, they were set to our table. They were never suffered to choose their meat, but always made to eat such things as were provided for the family.

Mornings they had always spoon-meat; sometimes at nights. But whatever they had, they were never permitted to eat, at those meals, of more than one thing; and of that sparingly enough. Drinking or eating between meals was never allowed, unless in case of sickness, which seldom happened. Nor were they suffered to go into the kitchen to ask anything of the servants, when they were at meat: if it was known they did, they were certainly beaten, and the servants severely reprimanded.

July 25

St. James (the Great) Day

There are many food-related traditions associated with this day. In the Ozarks (Arkansas), it was the traditional day for planting turnips, no matter what the weather.

In Britain, it was the day for the blessing of the apple crop, and the beginning of the oyster season.

There was also an old belief that if chicory is gathered at noon or midnight on St. James's Day, by cutting it with a golden knife, it has the power of making its possessor invisible and will also open locked doors or boxes. This task was to be performed silently—or the person would die instantly.

THE KNIGHTS OF THE GARTER

1771: London, England

Things got unruly at the Installation of the Knights of the Garter at Windsor on this day. There were places set for two thousand, and food was prepared in seventeen kitchens, with fifty cooks, plus other workers, in each kitchen. After the feast, a “scramble” for food occurred, as was not uncommon at great feasts of the time, although on this occasion the steward took preemptive action to minimize disorder and damage in the castle itself.

A contemporary report described the event:

After dinner came the scramble; but in a style somewhat different from the old use and wont. The Lord Steward thought it a better plan of œconomy to carry the victuals to the mob, than to let the mob come to the victuals. Accordingly the windows of the Castle were thrown open, and the provision tossed out to the gaping croud below. A cloud of hams, chickens, pasties, haunches, and delicacies of every kind, with knives, forks, plates, tablecloths, and napkins, their companies, darkened the air. This was succeeded by showers of liquor; some conveyed in bottles, properly corked, but the greater part in rain. The scramble was more diverting than any other part of the preceding farce. You would see one stooping to a fowl and a great ham falling plump upon his back; another, having a fork stuck in his shoulder, and looking up to secure himself from more of the arrows thus flying by day, received a creamed apple-pye full in his face. A beef-eater having lost his cap in the scuffle had his loss repaired by a pasty falling

inverted upon his head. A bargeman who had just secured a noble haunch of venison, was retiring as fast as he could with his booty, and ran with it full against the back of Lord—and made an impression on it so like a gridiron, that all the mob, after they ceased their laughter, cried out, smaok the Merry Andrew.

FOOD CERTIFICATION

1925: France

Roquefort cheese was the first product to receive the *Appellation d'Origine*. It is described as “cheese with a veined paste made from raw whole ewe’s milk, cylindrical in form, around 10 cm thick, its weight varying between 2.5 and 2.9 kilogrammes.”

The EEC application described the method of production:

In the manufacture of Roquefort unchanging methods are respected. The *Penicillium roqueforti* is introduced either in liquid form when the rennet is added or by sprinkling the curds when they are put into the moulds. After draining and salting, the cheeses are transported to the caves of Roquefort sur Soulzon, in fallen rock from the Combalou mountain, where it is specified that the ripening process must take place.

The application further elaborated on the cheese:

The special quality of Roquefort is a product of intimate collaboration between man and nature. It derives on the one hand from the characteristics of the traditional breeds of ewe that are fed in accordance with local custom and on the other hand from the unique atmosphere of the natural cellars in caves entirely hewn out of the rocks at the foot of the limestone cliffs of the Combalou, where a miracle of nature takes place to give Roquefort its incomparable flavour.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1830: Tasmania, Australia

George Robinson of Hobart Town was introduced to the native grass tree (*Xanthorrhoea species*) as an item of food on this day. George was on a mission to bring Christianity to the aboriginal people of Tasmania, but he was unusual for the time in that he had a conciliatory approach and believed that much could be learned from the indigenous inhabitants. His aboriginal companions on this day showed him how to strip leaves from the base of the thick stem and pound up the starchy core.

Robinson wrote on this day: “[I] observed the natives to eat the grass trees; they took a stone and beat down the young grass tree and stripped off the outer leaves. I ate some and found it very nutritious, in taste like a roasted chestnut.”

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt’s journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia: “Yesterday, Brown shot a black-winged pelican; the pectoral muscles and the extremities of which proved good eating; but the inside and the fat were of a nauseously fishy taste. Charley shot a bustard, and John a black ibis.”

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1666: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys. It was not unusual at the time for the kings and queens of Britain and Europe to dine where they could be observed by the public—and it was a special honor to be allowed to watch.

At White Hall. . . . By and by the King to dinner, and I waited there his dining; but, Lord! how little I should be pleased, I think, to have so many people crowding about me; and among other things it astonished me to see my Lord Barkeshire [who was almost 90 years old] waiting at table, and serving the King drink, in that dirty pickle as I never saw man in my life. Here I met Mr. Williams, who would have me to dine where he was invited to dine, at the Backe-stayres. So after the King’s meat was taken away, we thither; but he could not stay, but left me there among two or three of the King’s servants, where we dined with the meat that come from his table; which was most excellent, with most brave drink cooled in ice, (which at this hot time was welcome) and I drinking no wine, had methaglin for the

this hot time was welcome,) and I drinking no wine, had metheglin for the King's own drinking, which did please me mightily.

Metheglin and *mead* are both made from honey, and are probably the oldest intoxicating beverages known in Northern Europe. The physician and writer Andrew Boorde differentiated between mead and metheglin in *The Fyrst Booke of the Introduction of Knowledge*, published in about 1547:

Of Mead: Meade is made of honny and water boyled togyther; yf it be fyned and pure, it preserveth helth; but it is not good for them the whiche have the Ilyacke or the colycke.

Of Metheglyn: Metheglyn is made from honny & water, and herbes, boyled and soden togyther; yf it be fyned & stale, it is better in the regyment of helth than meade.

Pepys is particularly delighted to have metheglin “of the King’s own drinking”—that is, made for the King himself. It is entirely possible that the metheglin was made to a recipe from Sir Kenelm Digby, who was known to have made such things for royalty. His famous book was published in 1669 (after his death) with the magnificently descriptive title of

The Closet of the Eminently Learned Sir Kenelme Digbie Kt Opened: Whereby is Discovered Several ways for making of Metheglin, Sider, Cherry-Wine, &c. together with Excellent Directions for Cookery: As also for Preserving, Conserving, Candyng, &c.

Digby includes many recipes made for or supplied by royalty and aristocracy.

The Lady Vernon’s White Metheglin

Take three Gallons of water (rain water is best) boil in it broad Thyme, Rose-mary, Peny-royal, of each three handfuls. Then put it into a stone Pan to cool, and strain away the herbs; and when it is cold, put in one quart of honey, and mix it very well; then put to it one Nutmeg, a little Cinnamon; Cloves and Ginger; some Orange and Limon-peels. Then boil and scum it very well, while any scum will rise. Then put in your spices, and try with a New-laid-egg; and the stronger it is, the longer you may keep it; and if you will drink it presently, put it up in bottles, and rub the Corks with yest, that it may touch it, and it will be ready in three or four days to drink. And if you make it in the spring put no spices. but Cloves and Cinnamon. and add

Violets, Cowslips, Marigolds, and Gilly-flowers; and be sure to stop your vessel close with Cork; and to this put no yest, for the Clove-gilly-flowers will set it to work.

1872: Belgium

The writer Robert Louis Stevenson wrote to his mother on this day from Brussels.

Brussels, My Dear Mother,—I am here at last, sitting in my room, without coat or waistcoat, and with both window and door open, and yet perspiring like a terra-cotta jug or a Gruyere cheese.

We had a very good passage, which we certainly deserved, in compensation for having to sleep on cabin floor, and finding absolutely nothing fit for human food in the whole filthy embarkation.

July 26

DINNER AT THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

1899: London, England

Lieutenant Colonel Nathaniel Newnham-Davis was a noted Victorian gourmet and journalist. He was one of the earliest writers to have a regular newspaper food column, which in his case was in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, in which he penned frequent restaurant reviews. On this day he had a fine meal in one of the dining rooms of the House of Commons.

I have a vague remembrance of having as a small boy been taken round the Houses of Lords and Commons as a holiday treat. The Houses cannot have been sitting at the time, and the only thing that I remembered was the fact that the Lords sat on red seats, the Commons on green. . . . The House of Commons was, therefore, quite new ground to me, and I was very pleased when the Rising Legislator asked me if I would not dine some night with him in the House and hear a debate afterwards. . . . The House of Commons is a nice comforting address to give a cabman, and as I drove down Westminsterwards I felt that in the eyes of one individual I was that

glorious person, an M.P. . . . Presently the Rising Legislator appeared, and apologised for being somewhat late. A chat with a Cabinet Minister was the cause. I felt a sort of reflected glory in this. . . .

It is a fine room, this Strangers' Dining-Room. . . . I had asked to be given the ordinary dinner; but the Rising Legislator insisted on our having either a duck or a chicken in our menu. He ordered *consommé Brunoise*, which, looking at the bill of fare with him, I saw would cost him 5d. a portion; whitebait; *noisettes de mouton aux haricots verts*, two portions of which would cost him half a crown. From the price list I gathered, too, that hon. members can have a dinner, at fixed price, of two courses for 1s. 9d., three for 2s. 3d., four for 3s.

There was a difficulty about the duck, or chicken, and the waiter had to go from the table to the desk a couple of times before it was discovered that the Rising Legislator could have a duck; and a fine fat duck it was when it appeared. "I have got to speak tonight," said the Rising Legislator, "and therefore we must have champagne," and he ordered some '89 Clicquot to be put on ice.

The whitebait was excellent, the duck in life must have been a bird of aldermanic figure, the *noisettes* in size would have satisfied a hungry man and in tenderness have pleased a gourmet, and we had come to the strawberry-ice stage when again there was a loud mumble, and the Rising Legislator told me that the Speaker was in the chair.

From strawberry ice we had progressed to coffee and old brandy, when behind the wainscotting there was a ringing as of many bicycle bells, and about half of the diners rose, grasped their hats, and ran as swiftly as if they were going to a fire. "It is a count," said the Rising Legislator. "We will go down on to the Terrace and smoke a cigar before I find you a place to listen to the debate." . . . Presently, with a sigh, the Rising Legislator threw away his cigar. "I suppose we must go in and hear what they are talking of," he said.

DÉJEUNER WITH THE COMMODORE

1847: Cork, Ireland

The captain and officers of the U.S. frigate *Macedonian* were entertained with a pleasure cruise and an elegant *déjeuner* by the eminent citizens of Cork on this day, as a gesture of thanks for the gift of a cargo of Indian corn to relieve the famine induced by the potato blight. (See **July 16**)

The planning and execution of the event, and the tone of the report the following day in the *Cork Reporter*, showed a remarkable lack of sensitivity and compassion, given that thousands of ordinary Irish citizens had already died from starvation, and many thousands more were to die or escape by emigration over the next couple of years:

Seldom, if ever, has it been our lot to spend so truly a pleasant and happy a day as we yesterday enjoyed on board the *Royal Alice*, steamer, in the pleasure trip given by the citizens of Cork to Commodore de Kay and the officers of the United States frigate *Macedonian*. To say that the trip was one of unmingled pleasure and delight would but convey to our readers a very poor idea indeed of the happiness enjoyed by all on board.

. . . Shortly after five o'clock the whole party sat down to a most sumptuous *déjeuner* on the quarter deck. It is almost unnecessary to say that the entertainment was everything that could be expected from that excellent providore Mrs. Ushen. The tables were absolutely overburdened with substantial and delicate viands.

The *Cork Reporter* itself did not give the menu for the *déjeuner*, but it was reported elsewhere:

Fish

Turbot – Salmon - Lobster Salad

Meats

Spiced Beef - Rump of Beef - Haunch of Mutton – Lamb – Veal - Jugged Hare - Tongue

Poultry

Chicken-Duckling - Turkey-Pigeon Pie

Desserts

DESSERTS

Sponge Cakes - Jellies-Creams – Ices – Blancmanges – Pies – Tarts -
Cheese Cakes - Tartlets

Fruit

Grapes – Apples – Plums – Cherries - Strawberries

Drinks

Champagne - Claret – Port

FOOD & WAR

1942: Britain, World War II

Sweets (candy) and chocolate were rationed as of this day, with the preliminary allowance being two ounces per head, per week. The ministry had decided against a larger ration for children, on the grounds that sweets were not a necessity but a luxury, adding “it is for parents to decide if their children should have a larger share in the family’s allowance.”

The restrictions were to apply to all chocolate and sweets, wherever sold: automatic vending machines would no longer dispense sweets, and sweets would no longer be given as prizes at fun fairs and fetes.

Supplies of chocolate were to be made available for prisoners of war in Red Cross parcels, in amounts that would never be less than that for civilians, but “may at times be considerably greater.”

In the buildup to rationing, heavy selling at some retail shops was observed. In some parts it was reported that people were buying the equivalent of six months’ ration. This was made possible by the prior hoarding by some retailers, who did not want to find themselves short when rationing began and replacement stock would only be made available in return for coupons.

For most of the war and for some years afterward, the ration was twelve ounces for a four-week period.

U.S. STATE FOOD

1976: New York State

The legislature formally recognized the apple as the official fruit of the state of New York, and milk as the official beverage of the state. In August 1987, the apple muffin was added to the state's official emblems.

There is controversy and dispute about why New York is called "The Big Apple." It appears that the earliest usages did not reference the actual fruit but had some metaphorical meaning, perhaps related to horse-racing prizes, or perhaps indicating any large city. There are citations from 1909, but the term began to be used more commonly from the early 1920s. The name was rediscovered and indelibly attached to New York City in the 1970s, thanks to a campaign by the New York Convention and Visitors Bureau. Whatever the original meaning, the actual fruit became the symbol, and the state emblems followed.

FOOD FIRSTS

1275: Japan

The earliest known mention of edamamé (green soybeans in pods) occurs in a letter written by Nichiren Shonin Gosho Zenshu ("Saint Nichiren") to a Mr. Takahashi, who simply says, "Thank you for the edamamé."

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1862: British Columbia

Joseph T. Halpenny left his home and family to find his fortune during the Cariboo gold rush. In a letter he wrote home to family and friends on this day, he described the conditions on his overland journey.

I am now more than 3000 miles from my native land in the wilds of the Hudson Bay territory . . . about 150 every 2 provided their selves with one oxe and cart or more if thair means allowed them[,] but one is sufisant for

too [sic] men[;] each man provides 200 lbs of flour[,] 50 lbs of pemmican—that is Bufflow meat chopped up dried and the tallow mixed and milled in to bags maid[sic] of the skin of 2 bushel bags one of which will weigh 224 lbs[.] [T]his is very disgustfull loocking food mixed with the hare of the animal and grass it has been maid [sic] by Indians on the planes and chopped up on the ground acounts for its bad appearance[;] never the less you must take it (illegible) to cross the planes [sic][.] [Y]ou may bring some dried ham but it wont keep long[,] 3 or 4 lb of tea[,] each some dried apples[,] some suger[,] some ginger or peperment[—]it is good for giving bad water a flavour.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1754: England

Henry Fielding, in *The Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon*:

But, however pleasant our stay promised to be here, we were all desirous it should be short: I resolved immediately to despatch my man into the country to purchase a present of cider, for my friends of that which is called Southam, as well as to take with me a hogshead of it to Lisbon; for it is, in my opinion, much more delicious than that which is the growth of Herefordshire. I purchased three hogsheads for five pounds ten shillings, all which I should have scarce thought worth mentioning, had I not believed it might be of equal service to the honest farmer who sold it me, and who is by the neighboring gentlemen reputed to deal in the very best.

July 27

FOOD & WAR

1689: Ireland, Siege of Derry (Londonderry)

The siege of Derry took place during “The War of the Two Kings”—the supporters of the Catholic King James II and the Protestant Prince William of Orange, who became King William III of England. It lasted 105 days, from April 18 to July 28. The joint governor of Derry was the Anglican priest George Walker, who kept a diary in which he recorded some of the awful conditions in

the garrison as the siege progressed.

July 27. The Garrison is reduced to 4456 Men, and under the greatest extremity for want of Provision, which does appear by this Account taken by a Gentleman in the Garrison, of the price of our Food.

- Horse flesh, sold for one shilling and eight pence. Per pound
- A Quarter of a Dog, five shillings and six pence, fatned by eating the Bodies of the slain Irish.
- A dog's head, two shillings and six pence.
- A cat, four shillings and six pence.
- A rat, one shilling.
- A mouse, sixpence.
- A small Flock, taken in the River, not to be bought for Money, or purchased under the rate of a quantity of Meal.
- A pound of Greaves [grease], one shilling.
- A pound of Tallow, four shillings.
- A pound of salted Hides, one shilling.
- A quart of Horse blood, one shilling.
- A Horse-pudding, sixpence.
- A handful of Sea wreck, two pence.
- [The same quantity] of Chick-weed, one penny.
- A quart of meal when found, one shilling.

We were under so great Necessity, that we had nothing left unless we could prey upon one another: A certain Fat Gentleman conceived himself in the greatest danger, and fancying several of the Garrison lookt on him with a

greedy Eye, thought fit to hide himself for three days. Our drink was nothing but Water, which we paid very dear for, and cou'd not get without great danger; We mixt in it Ginger and Anniseeds, of which we had great plenty: our necessity of Eating the Composition of Tallow and Starch, did not only Nourish and Support us, but was an Infallible Cure of the Looseness; and recovered a great many that were strangely reduced by that Distemper, and preserved others from it.

The next day saw the arrival of a fleet led by the *Dartmouth-Frigat*, which successfully engaged the enemy and relieved the siege. An overjoyed Walker wrote that the relief had come just in time, for “we only reckon'd upon two days Life, and had only nine lean Horses left, and among us only one Pint of Meal to each man.”

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

1320: London, England

Punishment of the Pillory, for selling putrid meat. The record books of the city of London show that an effort was made to make the punishment fit the crime, and to include an element of humiliation. The investigation on this day was held on the “Monday next” after the Feast of St. James the Apostle. In 1320, the feast day (July 25) fell on a Saturday, so Monday was July 27.

Be it remembered, that in full Husting of Common Pleas, holden on the Monday next after the Feast of St. James the Apostle [25 July], in the I4th year etc., William le Clerk, of Hegham Ferrers, was brought before Hamon de Chiggwelle, Mayor, Nicholas de Farndone, and other Aldermen, with certain putrid and poisonous flesh-meat, unfit for human food. And because such flesh was putrid, and the body had died of disease, it was awarded by the aforesaid Mayor and Aldermen, that the said William le Clerk, in whose possession the said dead body was found, should be put upon the pillory, and the body burnt beneath him.

FOOD AS PROPAGANDA

1953: Berlin

The United States began on this day to distribute food parcels to West Berliners who crossed from the east side of the city. Over 1 million citizens collected a ten-pound parcel containing lard, condensed milk, flour, and peas. The Communist authorities did not prevent the East Germans collecting the food, although they denounced the maneuver as a propaganda trick. Within a week, however, countermeasures were instituted, and the number of East Berliners crossing the border slowed to a trickle. Rail travel to the West was prohibited, and a clear campaign of intimidation was started. Those who did cross the border were not prevented from doing so, but were harangued over loudspeakers as to the “wickedness” of the scheme that was an attempt to recruit agents for espionage and sabotage. Another tactic of the communists was to begin distributing food parcels themselves, although these were apparently confiscated parcels collected from (or voluntarily relinquished by) returning West Berliners.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1880: USA

African American inventor Alexander P. Ashbourne of Boston, Massachusetts, received Patent No. 230,518 for “Refining Coconut Oil” for “medicinal and general toilet purposes, . . . so that it will keep sweet and fresh for many years.”

His method involved grating, steaming, then boiling the mass, pressing it to remove the liquid, separating the oil, and then refining it by adding “to each gallon of pure oil three tablespoonfuls of pulverized white sugar and the whites and shells of three eggs and one half ounce of alum.” The oil was then subjected to a further boiling under a condensing apparatus to remove the final impurities which cause rancidity.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1836: USA

From missionary Narcissa Whitman’s journal of her journey in 1836 from New York, across the Rocky Mountains, to Oregon and beyond:

[H]ad quite a level route to-day—came down Bear river. Mr. McKay sent off about thirty of his men as trappers to-day. Several lodges of Indians also

left us to go in another direction, and we expect more to leave us tomorrow. They wish to go a different route from Mr. McLeod, and desire us to go with them; but it would be more difficult and lengthy than Mr. McLeod's. We are still in a dangerous country; but our company is large enough for safety. Our cattle endure the journey remarkably well. They supply us with sufficient milk for our tea and coffee, which is indeed a luxury. We are obliged to shoe some of them because of sore feet. Have seen no buffalo since we left Rendezvous. Have had no game of any kind except a few messes of antelope, which an Indian gave us. We have plenty of dried buffalo meat, which we have purchased from the Indians—and dry it is for me. It appears so filthy! I can scarcely eat it; but it keeps us alive, and we ought to be thankful for it. We have had a few meals of fresh fish, also, which we relished well, and have the prospect of obtaining plenty in one or two weeks more. Have found no berries; neither have I found any of Ma's bread[.] (Girls, do not waste the bread; if you knew how well I should relish even the driest morsel, you would save every piece carefully.) Do not think I regret coming. No, far from it; I would not go back for a world. I am contented and happy, notwithstanding I sometimes get very hungry and weary. Have six week's[sic] steady journey before us. Feel sometimes as if it were a long time to be traveling. Long for rest, but must not murmur.

1902–1904: Greenland

From Knut Rasmussen's narrative of his polar explorations, *Sledge Tracks Northwards*:

A dense fog further increases the difficulty of all search. Jorgen and Sitdluk have gone down to the houses at Natsilivik to see if there are meat deposits to be found.

Qisunguaq and I cross a ridge and make our way down to a creek, Narssaq, where there used to be tents.

We advance through the fog, seeing nothing and hoping for no more, our feet sore and our stomachs empty. After a few hours' toilsome march, we reach a rapid stream which we cannot cross; and we lie down under a great boulder, discuss the position, and decide which of the dogs we shall be

obliged to shoot, if we do not meet with people. We have eaten nothing for forty hours, and the last few days travelling have been exhausting. Just as we are dropping asleep the fog lifts suddenly and we are inspired with fresh hope. We fling large stones into the stream, but the current carries them with it. At last one stone remains in place and we dare the crossing.

We are over; we run up the opposite bank, which is steep and high, and both utter wild cries of delight: at a distance of about 200 yards there are five tents . . . people!—and food . . . food!

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1774: Oxford, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde, who is still resident at New College, Oxford:

I breakfasted, dined, supped and slept again at College. . . . [Six Gentlemen] dined and spent the afternoon with me at New College. . . . I borrowed the Chequer Room of the Bursars for my company to dine in. We were very merry and pushed the Bottle very briskly. I gave my Company for dinner, some green Pea Soup, a chine of Mutton, some New College Puddings, a goose, some Peas and a Codlin Tart with Cream. Madeira and Port Wine to drink after and at dinner some strong Beer, Cyder, Ale and small Beer. . . . I had a handsome dish of fruit after dinner. . . . I gave my company only for supper cold mutton. After supper I gave them to drink some Arrac Punch with Jellies in it and some Port Wine. . . . We drank 8 bottles of Port[,] one bottle of Madeira besides Arrac Punc, Beer and Cyder. I carried of my drinking exceedingly well indeed.

New College Pudding

A Two-Penny loaf grated, four ounces of beef-suet stirred, and four ounces of marrow, six ounces of scalded currants, four of fine sugar, half a nutmeg, a little salt, the yolks of six eggs, the whites of three, a little brandy; mix all well, and boil the pudding half an hour ; melted butter, wine, and sugar: sweetmeats may be added.

—*The lady's assistant for regulating and supplying her table, (1777) by*

Charlotte Mason

July 28

SLOCUM AND TURTLE

1895: At Sea

Joshua Slocum (1844–1909) was the first person to sail around the world single-handedly. He set off from Boston in his yacht, *Spray*, on April 24, 1895.

July 28 was exceptionally fine. The wind from the northwest was light and the air balmy. I overhauled my wardrobe, and bent on a white shirt against nearing some coasting-packet with genteel folk on board. I also did some washing to get the salt out of my clothes. After it all I was hungry, so I made a fire and very cautiously stewed a dish of pears and set them carefully aside till I had made a pot of delicious coffee, for both of which I could afford sugar and cream. But the crowning dish of all was a fish-hash, and there was enough of it for two. I was in good health again, and my appetite was simply ravenous. While I was dining I had a large onion over the double lamp stewing for a luncheon later in the day. High living to-day!

In the afternoon the *Spray* came upon a large turtle asleep on the sea. He awoke with my harpoon through his neck, if he awoke at all. I had much difficulty in landing him on deck, which I finally accomplished by hooking the throat-halyards to one of his flippers, for he was about as heavy as my boat. I saw more turtles, and I rigged a burton ready with which to hoist them in; for I was obliged to lower the mainsail whenever the halyards were used for such purposes, and it was no small matter to hoist the large sail again. But the turtle-steak was good. I found no fault with the cook, and it was the rule of the voyage that the cook found no fault with me. There was never a ship's crew so well agreed. The bill of fare that evening was turtle-steak, tea and toast, fried potatoes, stewed onions; with dessert of stewed pears and cream.

JEFFERSON AND VANILLA

1791: France & America

Thomas Jefferson is credited with introducing vanilla to America. While he was secretary of state, he wrote from Philadelphia to William Short, his *charge d'affaires* in Paris, about vanilla.

Petit informs me that he has been all over the town in quest of vanilla, & it is unknown here. I must pray you to send me a packet of 50 pods (batons) which may come very well in the middle of a packet of newspapers. It costs about 24 s a baton when sold by the single baton. Petit says there is great imposition in selling those which are bad; that Piebot generally sells good, but that still it will be safe to have them bought by some one used to them.

FOOD & THE LAW

1836: England

The Bread Act of 1822 was repealed on this day, and a new act made in its place. The act specified what types of bread could be made and determined that bakers could make bread of any weight or size. It also included regulations about weights and measures, deliveries, ingredients, and adulteration, and set out the penalties for breaches of the regulations.

As with the previous act, bakers convicted of adulterating bread or flour could be fined, and bread including flour not from wheat had to be clearly marked:

- S. 8. Bakers adulterating bread liable to a penalty not exceeding 10/. nor less than 5/. Justices to publish the names of offenders in a newspaper.
- S. 9 Persons adulterating corn, meal, or flour, or selling flour of one sort of corn as the flour of another sort, liable to a penalty not exceeding 20/. nor less than 5/.
- S. 10. Bread made of mixed meal or flour to be marked with a Roman M., under a penalty not exceeding 10s. for every pound weight of bread sold unmarked.

It was forbidden to bake bread on Sunday:

- S. 14. Bakers not to bake bread on the Lord's day, nor sell, nor bake,

or deliver articles baked, after half past one, under a penalty of 10s. for the first offence, 20s. for the second, and 40s. for every subsequent offence. Bakings may be delivered till half-past one on the Lord's-day.

And, rather strangely, it was also forbidden for a “miller, mealman, or baker” to act as a justice of the peace under a penalty of 100/.

FOOD & WAR

1943: USA, World War II

President Roosevelt “scooped” the Office of Price Administration in announcing the end of coffee rationing in a radio speech on this day. The OPA followed up with its own announcement a short time later to the effect that after midnight, ration points would not be needed to purchase coffee. The cessation of coffee rationing was made possible by the success of the anti-U-boat campaign, and the removal of the major threat to shipping. Roosevelt also anticipated that sugar rations would be significantly increased in the near future.

Coffee rationing had begun eight months previously, with the allowance being one pound per person every five weeks, for everyone over the age of fifteen years.

ANNIVERSARY

1941: Russia

This was the day that the Soviet biologist Georgii Dmitrievich Karpechenko was executed for his alleged “anti-Soviet” sentiments. Karpechenko is famous for his creation of a fertile, true-breeding hybrid of a radish and a cabbage (*Raphanobrassica*)—the first instance of a new species obtained through experimental crossbreeding. Hybrids of most species are not generally fertile, so his success was received with much excitement. Unfortunately the hybrid has the root of the cabbage and the flower head of a radish, rather than the reverse, which would be far more valuable from a culinary point of view.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1533: South America

Licenciado de la Gama wrote a letter to his patron, Charles V of Spain, describing his hopes for the New World.

They say that there is cinnamon, and the chief Atabalica [Atahualpa] that they hold prisoner say that they bring it from beyond, and he says that he has eaten it, and held it in his hands.

The story turned out to be myth, of course, there being no cinnamon in the Americas.

1769: Polynesia

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks. He describes the common problem (and flavor) of mites in the hardtack.

“*Ulhietea*”; “*Otahah*” This morn hoisted out a boat and sent ashore on the Island of Otahah in which Dr Solander and myself took a passage. We went through a large breach in the reef situate between two Islands calld Toahattu and Whennuaia within which we found very spacious harbours, particularly in one bay which was at least 3 miles deep. The inhabitants as usual so that long before night we had purchasd 3 hoggs, 21 fowls and as many yams and plantains as the boat would hold. Indeed of these last we might have had any quantity and a more useful refreshment they are to us in my opinion even than the pork; they have been for this week past boild and servd instead of bread; every man in the ship is fond of them and with us in the Cabbins they agree much better than the Bread fruit did which sometimes gripd us. But what makes any refreshments of this kind the more acceptable is that our bread is at present so full of vermin that notwithstanding all possible care I have sometimes had 20 at a time in my mouth, every one of which tasted as hot as mustard.

1770: Australia

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks: “Dind today upon the animal, [an 84 pound kangaroo, caught the previous day] who eat but ill, he was I suppose too old. His fault however was an uncommon one, the total want of flavour, for

he was certainly the most insipid meat I eat.”

1836: USA

From missionary Narcissa Whitman’s journal of her journey in 1836 from New York, across the Rocky Mountains, to Oregon and beyond: “Had some fresh fish for breakfast and some antelope for supper, sent us by Mr. McLeod and other friends in camp. Thus the Lord provides, and smoothes all our ways for us, giving us strength.”

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1773: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde:

Sister Clarke came to let me know that Frank dines with them tomorrow (by Richard’s invitation) upon the goose that Sister Clarke invited me to dine upon tomorrow. Therefore I shall not go. This is the second time of being disappointed to dine there,—First upon a Fawn and now a Goose.

1. *Mem:* J^s Clarke invited me to dine at his house upon part (of) a Fawn last week but did not mention any particular day.—However they had it last week and never let me know it.
2. *Mem:* Sister Clarke invited me yesterday to come and dine upon a goose as to-morrow, and now I cannot go as Frank is to dine there and whom I don’t choose to associate with.—The next time I am invited there I shall take care how I promise them.

1843: USA

From the American journals of Nathaniel Hawthorne: “We had green corn for dinner yesterday, and shall have some more to-day, not quite full grown, but sufficiently so to be palatable.”

1857: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau: “We were glad to find on this carry some raspberries, and a few of the *Vaccinium canadense* berries, which had begun to be ripe here.”

July 29

FOOD & WAR

1943: USA & Europe, World War II

General Dwight D. Eisenhower sent a telegram on this day requesting that the material for ten Coca-Cola mobile bottling plants be sent to the European war front. He also asked that 3 million bottles and all of the equipment necessary for producing the same quantity twice monthly be sent. Coca-Cola was made in the field before this date, but small portable bottling units, capable of being hauled behind jeeps, were used.

In December of 1941 the Coca-Cola Company’s wartime policy was announced: “We will see that every man in uniform gets a bottle of Coca-Cola for five cents wherever he is and whatever it costs the Company.”

U.S. STATE FOOD

1993: Rhode Island

The state legislature adopted coffee milk as the official state drink. A particularly popular form in Rhode Island is “Coffee Cabinet”—a coffee-flavored milk shake, so named, it is said, because the original vendor kept the blender in a kitchen cabinet.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1836: USA

From missionary Narcissa Whitman’s journal of her journey in 1836 from New York, across the Rocky Mountains, to Oregon and beyond:

At Fort Hall, We were hospitably entertained by Captain Thing, who keeps

At Fort Hall, we were hospitably entertained by Captain King, who keeps the fort. It was built by Captain Wyeth, a gentleman from Boston, whom we saw at Rendezvous on his way east. Our dinner consisted of dry buffalo meat, turnips and fried bread, which was a luxury. Mountain bread is simply coarse flour and water mixed and roasted or fried in buffalo grease. To one who has had nothing but meat for a long time, this relishes well. For tea we had the same, with the addition of some stewed service berries.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1754: At Sea

From Henry Fielding, in *The Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon*:

A gale struck up a little after sunrising, which carried us between three and four knots or miles an hour. We were this day at noon about the middle of the bay of Biscay, when the wind once more deserted us, and we were so entirely becalmed, that we did not advance a mile in many hours. In this situation, with our tables likewise fastened by ropes, the captain and myself took our meal with some difficulty, and swallowed a little of our broth, for we spilt much the greater part. The remainder of our dinner being an old, lean, tame duck roasted, I regretted but little the loss of, my teeth not being good enough to have chewed it.

July 30

LUNCH AT CAMP DAVID

2007: USA

The luncheon given to British prime minister Gordon Brown at Camp David on this day was a very relaxed affair indeed, if we are to judge from the menu:

Cheeseburgers

French Fries

Onion Rings

Banana Pudding

IN-FLIGHT FOOD

1927

The first recorded full in-flight meal service took place on an Air Union flight on this day. Stewards served hors d'oeuvres, lobster salad, cold chicken and ham, Niçoise, ice cream, cheese, and fruit. The beverage service included mineral water, coffee, wine, whisky, and champagne. The service was not entirely successful, however, as the aircraft was not well enough adapted. It was discontinued two years later.

Note that the menu above was made up entirely of cold dishes. The first full hot food service in flight was served on April 29 (*see April 29*).

FOOD & THE LAW

1998

A meeting of the Australian and New Zealand Food Standards Council (ANZFS) established Standard A18 to regulate food produce using gene technology. The standard came into effect on May 13, 1999, and required all “substantially different” GM foods to be labeled.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1819: USA

Alonzo Delano (1809–1874) traveled overland to California in 1849–1851.

By sunrise we had driven two miles, when, in sight of hundreds of wagons, we reached the celebrated Humboldt, or Mary's River. . . . Game began once more to appear. Sage hens, ducks, wild geese and cranes were very numerous, and easily killed. A few fish were in the streams, but we were unable to catch any with the hook. I was weak from continued disease, still I was able to walk slowly nearly all day, and kept along with the train without much difficulty.

It was a strange thing for us to have as many comforts as we found here, such as wood, water, grass and game; and the sage hens and ducks made a delicious repast. To-day our sugar was used up, and from this time we were obliged to drink our tea and coffee without sweetening. It is astonishing what appetites we had, and how much the stomach could digest. It seems almost insatiable. I have frequently ate four slices of bacon and drank a quart of coffee at a meal, and still felt a desire for more; and I have seen one of my mess drink half a gallon of coffee at a sitting. This inordinate appetite, with the quantity of salt meat used, is probably one principal cause of the frequent cases of scurvy on the road. Fortunately, we had a large supply of vinegar and acid, which, together with our getting out of bacon sometime before our arrival in California, prevented any such disease in our company. When laying in my supplies I bought one hundred pounds of sugar for four men, and it lasted only ninety days. Distance, eighteen miles.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1557: London, England

From the diary of Henry Machin. He describes a meal at a tavern with friends.

[The xxx] day of July master Dave Gyttons, master Meynard, and master Draper, and master Smyth, master Coldwelle, and master Asse and Gybes, and master Packyngtun, and monser the Machyn de Henry, and mony mo, ded ett alff a busshell of owsturs [oysters] in Anckur lane at master Smyth and master Gytton's seller a-pone hoghedes, and candyll lyght, and onyons and red alle and clarett alle, and muskadylle and malmesey alle, fre cope, at viij in the mornyng.

TRANSLATION: The thirtieth day of July Mr. Dave Gyttons, Mr. Maynard, and Mr. Draper and Mr. Smith, Mr. Coldwell, and Mr. Ash and Giles and Mr. Packington and Monsieur Machyn de Henry and many more did eat half a bushel of oysters in Anchor Lane at Mr. Smith and Mr. Gittons's cellar, upon hogheads and candlelight and onions and red ale and claret ale and muscatel and malmsey, all free cup, at eight in the morning.

July 31

BLACK TOT DAY

1970: Britain

A three-hundred-year-old tradition ended on this day when the “Up Spirits” call (the call to the evening ration of navy rum) six bells in the forenoon watch of the ships of the Royal Navy was heard for the last time. The rum ration had been part of a naval seaman’s life since 1655. The ration was half a pint a day. In 1740, Admiral Vernon ordered that the rum was to be mixed with water in a 4:1 water to rum ratio, to be dispensed twice a day. The day is informally celebrated as “Black Tot Day.” (See also August 21, 1740.)

FOOD & WAR

1777: American Revolutionary War

Abigail Adams wrote to her husband, John, away attending the Continental Congress in Philadelphia, from Boston.

You must know that there is a great scarcity of sugar and coffee. . . . An eminent, wealthy, stingy merchant had a hogshead of coffee in his store, which he refused to sell . . . under six shillings per pound. A number of females . . . assembled with a cart and trucks, marched down to the warehouse, and demanded the keys, which he refused to deliver. Upon which, one of them seized him by his neck. . . . The women “then opened the warehouse, hoisted out the coffee themselves, put it into the truck and drove off. . . . A large concourse of men stood amazed, silent spectators of the whole transaction.”

FOOD & GOVERNMENT

1925: London, England

The first meeting of the Food Council took place on this day. The council was a non-statutory body set up on the recommendation of a Royal Commission on Food Prices, which had been meeting and taking evidence since being appointed the previous November.

The Food Council's purpose was to act in the interests of consumers, traders, government departments, and other stakeholders, in matters of complaints relating to the supply or prices of staple foods, although it had no powers of compulsion. The foods specified were wheat, flour, bread, bacon, ham, milk, butter, cheese, eggs, fish, fruit, vegetables, sugar, and tea. The council was required to report to the president of the Board of Trade at intervals as it saw fit.

SELF-SERVICE

1950: Britain

Sainsbury's opened the first self-service store in Britain, in Croydon. The grocery chain had its beginnings in a small dairy store opened by John and Mary Sainsbury in Drury Lane in 1869. By 1922, Sainsbury's was the largest grocery retailer in the United Kingdom. Alan Sainsbury, the grandson of the founder, visited the United States and saw self-service stores there and believed that was the model of the future for Britain too.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1790: America

The first patent issued under the 1790 Patent Act was to Samuel Hopkins, born in Vermont and living in Philadelphia, for an improved method of "Making Pot Ash and Pearl Ashes." Potash is crude potassium carbonate derived from wood ashes. It is used in the manufacture of many industrial and agricultural products (soap and glass, for example).

Pearl ash is a slightly more refined form of potash also known as "salts of tartar" or tartaric acid, and it has a very useful culinary function. When it is mixed with an acid ingredient such as sour milk or lemon juice, the resulting chemical reaction produces carbon dioxide, which acts as a leavening agent. In other words, it is a form of baking powder, and its great value was that it reduced the reliance on yeast. The use of pearl ash to leaven cakes gradually increased as the nineteenth century advanced.

The following recipe includes pearl ash, and the author includes some general comments about its use.

Lafayette Gingerbread

- Five eggs.
- Half a pound of brown sugar.
- Half a pound of fresh butter.
- A pint of sugar-house molasses.
- A pound and a half of flour.
- Four tablespoonfuls of ginger.
- Two large sticks of cinnamon, powdered and sifted.
- Three dozen grains of allspice, powdered and sifted.
- Three dozen of cloves, powdered and sifted.
- The juice and grated peel of two large lemons.

Stir the butter and sugar to a cream. Beat the eggs very well. Pour the molasses, at once, into the butter and sugar. Add the ginger and other spice, and stir all well together.

Put in the egg and flour alternately, stirring all the time. Stir the whole very hard, and put in the lemon at the last. When the whole is mixed, stir it till very light.

Butter an earthen pan, or a thick tin or iron one, and put the gingerbread in it. Bake it in a moderate oven, an hour or more, according to its thickness. Take care that it do not burn.

Or you may bake it in small cakes, or little tins.

Its lightness will be much improved by a small tea-spoonful of pearl-ash dissolved in a tea-spoonful of vinegar, and stirred lightly in at the last.* Too much pearl-ash will give it an unpleasant taste.

If you use pearl-ash, you must omit the lemon, as its taste will be entirely

destroyed by the pearl-ash. You may substitute for the lemon, some raisins and currants, well floured to prevent their sinking.

This is the finest of all gingerbread, but should not be kept long, as in a few days it becomes * very hard and stale.

* If the pearl-ash is strong, half a tea-spoonful will be sufficient, or less even will do. It is better to stir the pearl-ash in, a little at a time, and you can tell by the taste of the mixture, when there is enough.

—*Seventy-five Receipts for Pastry, Cakes, and Sweetmeats* (Boston, 1830)
by Eliza Leslie

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1795: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde. Haymakers are busy on his farm, and he must see that they are fed.

It being a fine Morning and Haymakers all at work, My Sister ordered a Leg of Pork to be dressed for them, but Rain coming on about Noon they were obliged to leave off and go to their respective homes. The Pork had been boiling for them two Hours, we had it taken up and put by for them against another Day. Dinner to day, boiled Salmon & cold rost Beef &c.

1856: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau:

How thick the berries—low blackberries, *Vaccinium vacillans*, and huckleberries—on the side of Fair Haven Hill! The berries are large, for no drought has shrunk them. They are very abundant this year to compensate for the want of them the last. The children should grow rich if they can get eight cents a quart for blackberries, as they do.

1874: At Sea.

From the diary of James Anderson McLauchlan, a Scot aged twenty-one years, en route to Australia aboard the *City of Adelaide*:

[F]oggy all day . . . amusing to see the civility we get from the cooks now. . . [T]hey even come and ask if [we] would like a little more soup, or would we like a little hot water, a commodity which if we had asked even for our greasy dishes a week or two ago, we would have got nothing but insult. . . . [T]he secret is we are drawing near the end of our journey and they are expecting us to subscribe two or three pounds to them. . . . [A]fraid they will be woefully mistaken[;] . . . amongst all the ship, they least deserve it.

August

August 1

LAMMAS

According to the ancient Celtic calendar, August 1 was “Lammas,” one of the “cross-quarter days” that occurred halfway between the solstice and equinox. The ancient pagan rites and festivities became adapted to and amalgamated with Christian concepts and practices, as happened with the Celtic winter solstice festival of Yule and the Christian celebration of Christmas.

The name *Lammas* is probably derived from the Irish Celtic Feast of Lughnasadh, or Lugh, an ancient Irish sun goddess. A Lammas Fair has been held at Ballycastle in County Antrim since the fifteenth century, and the traditional foods of the season are *dulse* and *yellowman*. These treats have been immortalized in an old song: “Did you treat your Mary Ann to some dulse and yellowman, / At the Auld Lammas Fair in Ballycastle-O?”

Dulse is an edible seaweed with deep purplish-red fronds. It is sold at the fair dried in bags, to be munched on like popcorn. It is also boiled or roasted, and added to salads or bread.

Yellowman is honeycomb toffee, and in the version sold today must be a relatively recent tradition as it relies on the use of baking soda—an early nineteenth-century invention—to give it the characteristic texture.

A SUGGESTED MENU

1864: Britain

A number of cookery books designed to assist the young housewife of the rapidly increasing middle class were produced in the second half of the nineteenth century in Britain, and some of these gave suggested menus for every day of the year. One of these was *Cre-Fydd's Family Fare: the young housewife's daily assistant*, published in 1864. Most middle-class families kept

servants, and this book included a menu for the servants' dinner ("the kitchen").

For August 1, the menus were:

Breakfast

Cold
lamb.

Dinner

Small brill, lobster sauce.

Spiced
beef.

Cold lamb, salad, minced mutton cutlets with
macaroni.

Kitchen

Cold mutton,
salad.

Rolls.

Annette's pudding.

Fruit.

In the absence of refrigeration, an efficient system of using up leftover food was essential if waste was to be avoided, and it is clear from books of this type that this was an important part of menu planning. In the words of the author: "If the bills of fare be followed in succession, it will be seen that everything is disposed of, as nearly as can be, without being acquainted with the appetites and habits of the consumers."

The cold lamb for breakfast and for the servants' dinner on this day was leftover from the ribs of lamb served at the previous night's dinner, for example.

FOOD FIRSTS

1896

The first-known written use of the word *brunch* appeared in *Punch* magazine on this day: "To be fashionable nowadays we must 'brunch.' Truly an excellent portmanteau word, introduced, by the way, last year, by Mr. Guy Beringer, in the now defunct *Hunter's Weekly*, and indicating a combined breakfast and lunch."

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1893

Henry D. Perky and William H. Ford, of Watertown, NY, received Patent No. 502,378 for a “Machine for the Preparation of Cereals for Food.”

The object of the invention was “the economic reduction of cereals in the grain state to desirable forms of food without detracting from their natural nutritious qualities and virtue and for the better preparation of the same for more convenient and general use.” The process was to first boil then partially dry the cereal the press it out into “threads, lace or ribbons or sheets, etc.” The commercial result was Shredded Wheat™.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769: Polynesia

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks.

The wind right off the land of Ulhietea mak[in]g it difficult to get in tho we see a good inlet; after turning to windward till afternoon we however at last get hold of anchorage in the mouth of it. Many canoes came immediately about the ship bringing all sorts of trade so that before night we have purchas'd several piggs and fowls and a large quantity of Plantains and Cocoa nutts.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1667: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys.

Up, and all the morning at the office. At noon my wife and I dined at Sir W. Pen's, only with Mrs. Turner and her husband, on a damned venison pasty, that stunk like a devil. However, I did not know it till dinner was done. We had nothing but only this, and a leg of mutton, and a pullet or two.

1857: USA

Thoreau was on his third trip into the Maine woods.

I caught two or three large red chivin (*Leuciscus pulchellus*) early this morning, within twenty feet of the camp, which, added to the moose-tongue, that had been left in the kettle boiling over night, and to our other stores, made a sumptuous breakfast. The Indian made us some hemlock tea instead of coffee. . . . After the regular supper we attempted to make a lily soup of the bulbs which I had brought along, for I wished to learn all I could before I got out of the woods. Following the Indian's directions, for he began to be sick, I washed the bulbs carefully, minced some moose-meat and some pork, salted and boiled all together, but we had not patience to try the experiment fairly, for he said it must be boiled till the roots were completely softened so as to thicken the soup like flour; but though we left it on all night, we found it dried to the kettle in the morning, and not yet boiled to a flour. Perhaps the roots were not ripe enough, for they commonly gather them in the fall. As it was, it was palatable enough, but it reminded me of the Irishman's limestone broth. The other ingredients were enough alone. The Indian's name for these bulbs was Sheepnoc. I stirred the soup by accident with a striped maple or moose-wood stick, which I had peeled, and he remarked that its bark was an emetic.

Sheepnoc: This is *Lilium canadense*, which goes by the common names Canada Lily, Wild Yellow-Lily, and Meadow Lily. As with other *Lilium* species, the roots were used as famine food.

August 2

A TABLE d'HÔTE DINNER

1932: USA

Guests at the Atlanta Biltmore Hotel, Atlanta, Georgia, were offered the following dinner on this day:

Table d'Hote Dinner

Served 6 to 9 P.M.

\$2.00 per Person

Fruit Cocktail, Maraschino

or Honey Dew Melon Frappe

—

Minestrone au Parmesan with Diablotins

or Tomato Broth in Jelly

—

Celery Olives

—

(Choice of)

Colorado Rainbow Brook Trout Saute, Amandine

Fresh Crabe Meat en Bordure au Gratin

Broiled Genuine Calf Sweetbread on Toast

with Virginia Ham, Grilled Mushrooms,

Fresh Succotach and Potatoes Allumette

Fresh Killed Georgia Chicken a la Maryland

with Apple and Pineapple Fritters

Sauce Ivoire

—

Stuffed Tomato a la Printanier

or Salad Combination, French Dressing

—

Cream Puff Surprise

or Biscuit Tortoni, Macaroons

—

Fresh Made Corn Muffins, Corn Sticks, Hot

Biscuits, Rolls, Buttered Toast, French Bread

or Whole Wheat Bread

Butter

—

Coffee, Tea or Milk

Choice of Any Three of the Above Courses Including

Bread and Drink Will be Served for

\$1.50 per Person

—

Tuesday, Aug. 2, 1932

Table d'Hôte means “the host’s table,” and in restaurant terminology refers to a fixed-price meal with limited choices. Originally the phrase also indicated a common dining table and a fixed hour of service at which the meal was served. An *à la Carte* menu, on the other hand, is one in which dishes are individually priced, and the customer orders however many he or she wishes.

FOOD & THE LAW

1886: USA, Congress Passed the Oleomargarine Act

In the late nineteenth century, butter had become increasingly expensive and had progressively lost ground to margarine after its introduction in 1874. In an effort

progressively lost ground to margarine after its introduction in 1874. In an effort to protect their own interests, the powerful dairy industry successfully lobbied for passage of the Act, which imposed a tax of two cents per pound of margarine, and required manufacturers, wholesalers, and retailers of margarine to obtain expensive licences. The law did not reduce margarine sales, however, as it did not require identification of the substitute as margarine at the point of sale.

The issue of margarine being artificially colored to look like butter was also an issue, and an amendment to the Act of May 9, 1902, quintupled the tax on colored margarine and reduced that on uncolored to a quarter of a cent per pound. Enterprising manufacturers got around this last regulation by selling a small packet of yellow coloring with the margarine, to be mixed by the customer at home. The home coloring of margarine lasted until the 1940s. The act was repealed in 1950.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1904: USA

Michael J. Owens, of Toledo, Ohio, was granted Patent No. 766,768 for a "Glass-shaping Machine." The patent application summarized that:

The invention relates to the construction of a machine for shaping glass; and it consists in the construction of a machine which will collect or gather the desired quantity of glass; further, in shaping the gathered glass into the form of a blank which may be blown and distributing the glass around a blow-opening in the shaping of said blank; further, in the blowing mechanism cooperating with the gathering and shaping device by which the gathered blank may be blown to its final form. The operations of the machine as herein shown are entirely automatic, and the machine operates continuously to gather the glass, shape it into the desired blank, and blow it to form without the intervention of any labor.

Owens's invention was a major advance in glass manufacture. His machine could produce 240 bottles per hour and reduce labor costs by 80 percent, making mass-production of cheap bottles and jars a possibility. Owens had himself been apprenticed as a glass-blower at the age of ten, and his invention had the added benefit of eliminating this practice of child labor from the industry.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1772: At Sea

Captain James Cook, aboard the *Resolution*, with the companion ship *Adventure* left Madeira on this day after a brief stopover to take on fresh supplies en route to find and claim *Terra Australis*.

[T]he Sloops were supply'd with fresh Beef and Onions and a Thousand Bunches of the latter were distributed among the people for a Sea store . . . a Custom I observed last Voyage and had reason to think they recived great benifit therefrom. Having compleated our Water and taken on board a large supply of Wine, fruit & other necessarys, we on Sunday the 2nd of Augt at 10 o'Clock in the pm weigh'd and put to sea with the Adventure in company.

One of the secondary projects of the voyage was to test the efficacy of various foodstuffs in the prevention of scurvy. Cook was keen to try onions (which are in fact a good source of Vitamin C—although the deficiency of this vitamin as the cause of scurvy was not known at the time). In a report to the Admiralty on September 20, 1771, after the completion of the voyage, he wrote:

Also at Madeira I purchased a quantity of Onions which was distributed to the ships Company and which I understand has been Practised by ships on the like voyages. And likewise at Batavia [Indonesia] the sickly state of the ships Company, made it necessary to have an extraordinary quantity of Vegetables every day, which Article I have charged in my accounts. And Pray their Lordships order that it may be allowed me.

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia.

Many lagoons were on the flats, surrounded by Polygonums, and frequented by ducks, spoonbills, and various aquatic birds. They had shot, however, only one teal and a spoonbill. In travelling down the creek, we frequently started wallabies. *Geophaps plumifera* was very frequent on the Ironbark ridges. A cormorant with white breast and belly, and the rose

cockatoo were shot; the former tasted as well as a duck. Brown collected a good quantity of the gum of Terminalia, and the seeds of the river bean, which made an excellent coffee. The native bee was very abundant.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1662: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys.

I to Captain Cocke's along with him to dinner, where I find his lady still pretty, but not so good a humour as I thought she was. We had a plain, good dinner, and I see they do live very frugally. I eat among other fruit much mulberrys, a thing I have not eat of these many years, since I used to be at Ashted, at my cozen Pepys's.

1857: USA

Henry Thoreau is on his third trip into the Maine woods. The previous day his native Indian companion had become ill: "The Indian was quite sick this morning with the colic. I thought that he was the worse for the moose-meat he had eaten."

August 3

DINNER WITH THE EMPEROR

1908: Sweden

King Gustav V of Sweden gave a dinner to Emperor Willhelm II of Germany in the Royal Palace, Stockholm, on this day.

Consommé Printanière

Petits Timbales Talleyrand

Turbot Mornay

Filet de Boeuf à l'Anglaise

Bouchés Félicia

Sorbet Rose

Poulets Farcis, Salade

Tomatoes Argenteuil

Bombe Sicilienne

Friandises

Pailles au Parmesan

Dessert

A GASTRONOMIC SOCIETY

1950: France

The gastronomic society *La Confrérie de la Chaine de Rôtisseurs* was founded on this day, re-establishing a seven-hundred-year-old tradition. The society claims to be based on the practices of *Les Oyers* (Goose-Roasters), a guild formed in Paris in 1248 under the patronage of King Louis IX. The membership expanded, the regulations were modified, and the society's fortunes waxed and waned over the centuries. In 1610, the guild (by now called *Rôtisseurs*) was granted a royal charter and a coat of arms. The original *Confrérie* was a victim of the French Revolution and was disbanded in 1791.

Over a century and a half later, five food enthusiasts, including Maurice Edmond Sailland, nicknamed Curnonsky and also known as the "Prince of Gastronomes," decided (over a *Gigot à la Broche*) to revive the society.

The modern *Chaine* has the same coat of arms as the old, and the same mission—to encourage excellence in all areas of the culinary arts, especially the preparation and enjoyment of roasted and grilled meats.

PRISON FOOD

1880: Bergen, Norway

An article in the *New York Times* on this day described the conditions in the penitentiary at Bergen.

[P]rison bill of fare, which last runs as follows: “Sunday breakfast consists of 15 ounces of rye bread and half a bowl of “ollebrod” (beer, mixed with bread), the same breakfast being served likewise on all the weekdays. Dinner, Sunday, one bowl of pea-soup, four ounces of bacon, eight of rye bread, and half a bowl of potatoes. Monday, one bowl of porridge, half a bowl of milk, and eight ounces of rye bread. Tuesday, one bowl of vegetable soup, six ounces of meat, half a bowl of potatoes, and eight ounces of rye bread. Wednesday, one bowl of meat-broth, eight ounces of meal, half a bowl of potatoes, and eight ounces of rye bread. Thursday, one bowl of pea-soup, six ounces of meat, half a bowl of potatoes, and eight ounces of rye bread. Friday, same as Monday. Saturday, one bowl of “ollebrod,” eight ounces of rye bread, half a bowl of potatoes, and 16 ounces of rye bread; supper, one bowl of porridge and half a bowl of milk on every day of the week. N.B—the bacon shall be without bone or gristle.

FOOD & WAR

1861: USA, American Civil War

The Camp and Garrison daily ration for the Union Army from this date to June 20 was to be:

- Meat: 12 ounces of pork or bacon, or
- 1 pound and 4 ounces of salt or fresh beef
- Bread: 1 pound and 6 ounces of soft bread or flour, or
- 1 pound of hard bread [hardtack] or
- 1 pound and 4 ounces of corn meal

- To every 100 rations:
- 15 pounds of beans or peas, and
- 10 pounds of rice or hominy
- 10 pounds of green coffee, or
- 8 pounds of roasted (or roasted and ground) coffee, or
- 1 pound and 8 ounces of tea
- 15 pounds of sugar
- 4 quarts of vinegar
- 1 pound and 4 ounces of adamantine, or star candles
- 4 pounds of soap
- 3 pounds and 12 ounces of salt
- 4 ounces of pepper
- 30 pounds of potatoes. when practicable. and
- 1 quart of molasses

Substitutes: “Desiccated compressed potatoes, or desiccated compressed mixed vegetables, at the rate of 1 ounce and 1/2 of the former, and 1 ounce of the latter to the ration, may be substituted for beans, peas, rice, hominy, or fresh potatoes.”

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1857: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau.

This was the midst of the raspberry season. We found them abundant on every carry on the East Branch and below, and children were carrying them from all sides into Bangor. I observed that they were the prominent dish on

from all sides into Bangor. I observed that they were the prominent dish on the tables, once a low scarlet mountain, garnishing the head of the table in a dish two feet across. Earlier the strawberries are equally abundant, and we even found a few still deep in the grass. Neither of these abound about Boston, and we saw that they were due to the peculiar air of this higher latitude. . . . It was P. who commonly reminded us that it was dinner-time on this excursion, sometimes by turning the prow to the shore. He once made an indirect but lengthy apology, by saying that we might think it strange, but one who worked hard all day was very particular to have his dinner in good season.

1921: Austria

The novelist D. H. Lawrence wrote to his friend Catherine Carswell from Salzburg, where he and his wife, Frieda, were staying with Frieda's sister.

You can buy almost anything, with enough krone. But the shops are empty—the land financially and commercially just ruined. There is very good white bread—but the food is monotonous.

August 4

FOOD FOR THE POOR

1713: England

The Society of Friends (otherwise known as Quakers) set up a workhouse in Clerkenwell, London, in 1702. The bill of fare was revised from time to time. On August 4, 1713, it was set down as follows:

DAY 1	Breakfast	Ancient friends: each 4 ounces bread, 2 ounces cheese, or 1 ounce butter & beer sufficient.
		Children: each 4 ounces bread, 1½ ounces cheese, or 1 ounce butter & beer sufficient.

Ancient friends: each 8 ounces roast meat without bones,

Dinner 4 ounces bread & 1 pint beer.
Children: big, each 8 ounces; small, each 6 ounces roast meat, 4 ounces bread & beer sufficient.

Supper Ancient friends: each the same as at breakfast.
Children: each the same as at breakfast.

DAY 2 Breakfast Ancient friends: each the same as on first days.
Children: the same.

Dinner Ancient friends: each 1 pint of milk, 4 ounces bread & beer if required.
Children: each 1 pint of milk, well thickened with bread.

Supper Each same as at breakfast.

DAY 3 Breakfast Each same as on second days.

Dinner Ancient friends: Each 8 ounces boiled meat without bones, 4 ounces bread & 1 pint of beer.
Children: big, each 6 ounces of meat; & to small, 4 ounces, with 1 pint of broth, 4 ounces of bread & beer sufficient.

Supper Each the same as at breakfast.

Ancient friends: each one pint of broth, 4 ounces bread &

DAY
4 Ancient friends: each one pint of broth, 4 ounces bread &
Breakfast 1 pint of beer.

Children: each 1 pint of broth well thickened with bread.

 Ancient friends: each 1 pint of furmenty or rice milk, 4
Dinner ounces bread & 1 pint of beer.

Children: each one pint of furmenty or rice milk with
bread & beer sufficient.

Supper Each same as third days' supper.

DAY
5 Breakfast Each the same as on third days.

 Ancient friends: each 8 ounces boiled meat without
bones, 4 ounces bread, 1 pint beer.

Dinner Children: big, each 6 ounces meat & 1 pint broth; to
small, each 4 ounces meat & 1 pint broth, 4 ounces bread
and beer sufficient.

Supper Each the same as at breakfast.

DAY6 Breakfast Each the same as on fourth days.

 Ancient friends: each one pound of plum or plain pudding
Dinner & 1 pint of beer.

Children: big, each 1 pound of pudding; and to small,
each 12 ounces with beer sufficient.

Supper Each the same as on fifth days.

DAY
7 Breakfast Each the same as on fifth days.

Ancient friends: each 1 pint of milk pottage with 4 ounces bread, or 1 pint of peas pottage & 1 ounce butter & 1 pint of beer.

Dinner

Children: 1 pint of milk pottage thickened with bread, or 1 pint of peas pottage with bread, butter and beer sufficient.

Supper Each the same as on fifth days.

N.B. It is left to the discretion of the steward to diet the aged or sick as may be thought convenient. And when peas, beans, mackerel, herring, salt fish &c are in season . . . [he may] change a meal or meals as shall seem necessary.

Absent persons must have no allowance.

FOOD & THE LAW

1621: Scotland, an Act Regarding Banqueting and Apparel

The last sumptuary law to be enacted in Britain received royal assent on this day. It was a Scottish law enacted during the reign of the Protestant King James VI of Scotland. It appears to have been in response to an expected wreaking of God's vengeance for the indulgent lifestyle of the people ("the great hurt coming").

Our sovereign lord and estates of parliament, considering the great hurt coming to this country by the superfluous usage of unnecessary sumptuousness in meat, apparel and otherwise, and that by all sorts of people indiscriminately, without distinction of persons of rank or quality

people indiscriminately, without distinction of persons or ranks or quality, for repressing the said abuse in time coming, do statute and ordain that none of our sovereign lord's lieges of whatsoever quality or degree shall wear . . . [16 paragraphs].

17. It is further statuted and ordained that no person use any manner of dessert of wet and dry confections at banqueting, marriages, baptisms, feasting or any meals except the fruits growing in Scotland; as also figs, raisins, damsons, almonds and other unconfected fruits under the pain of 1,000 merks on every occasion, excepting likewise the use of the aforesaid forbidden confections to be lawful for the entertainment of his majesty, prince and their trains being within the country, and for ambassadors and strangers of great quality.

18. And it is statuted moreover that no person of whatsoever quality use any feasting at burials or offer of other meats except bread and drink; as likewise no person use any eating or drinking at night vigils or lyke-wakings under the pain of 1,000 merks on every occasion.

FOOD & WAR

1855: Crimean War

The *Times* reported Prime Minister Robert Peel's statement to the House in regard to the food supplies to the troops in the Crimea.

Arrangements have also been made for varying the daily rations of the soldier, by the issue on certain days of the week of fresh meat and bread, instead of salt meat and biscuit; and one of the minor charges to which we have above referred will also be made instrumental to improving the ordinary diet of the troops. Nothing was more commonly complained of in the camp last year than the scarcity of fuel, the want of which, besides imposing a vast amount of labour on men already overworked, was a fatal impediment to anything like wholesome cookery. The soldiers, when exhausted with duty, were compelled to cast about in all directions for such firing as they could find in the shape of roots or shrubs, and the consequence was that their rations were too often either ill-dressed or not dressed at all. To obviate such sufferings for the future the charge for fuel and lights, originally standing at 22,000*l.*, has now been liberally raised to

100,000*l.* by a supplemental vote of 78,000*l.*, and Mr. Peel, in alluding to the subject, remarked, with a well-deserved compliment to M. Soyer, that the services of that accomplished artist had been effectively applied to the improvement of the military kitchens. These precautions appear to have been judiciously devised—in fact, they are addressed directly to the weakest points of our former arrangements, and we hope that, with the aid of good depôts, abundant fuel, and M. Soyer's instructions, our troops may be relieved for the future from privations so severely felt.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia.

Our meat bags were now empty, and it was necessary to kill another bullock, although the spot was by no means favourable for the purpose. . . . No time was to be lost, and, as the afternoon had advanced, we commenced operations immediately. Though the bullock was young, and in excellent working condition, the incessant travelling round the gulf had taken nearly all the fat out of him, and there was scarcely enough left to fry his liver.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1856: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau.

Conantum hillside is now literally black with berries. What a profusion of this kind of food Nature provides, as if to compensate for the scarcity last year! Fortunate that these cows in their pasture do not love them, but pass them by. The blackberries are already softening, and of all kinds there are many, many more than any or all creatures can gather. They are literally five or six species deep. First, away down in the shade under all you find, still fresh, the great very light blue (i.e. with a very thick blue bloom) *Vaccinium Pennsylvanicum* in heavy clusters, that early ambrosial fruit, delicate-flavored, thin-skinned, and cool,—Olympian fruit; then, next above, the still denser bunches and clusters of *V. vacillans*, of various

above, the sun denser bunches and clusters of *V. vacillans*, of various varieties, firm and sweet, solid food; and, rising above these, large blue and also shining black huckleberries (*Gaylussacia resinosa*) of various flavors and qualities; and over all runs rampant the low blackberry (*Rubus Canadensis*), weighing down the thicket with its wreaths of black fruit. Also here and there the high blackberry, just beginning, towers over all. You go daintily wading through this thicket, picking, perchance, only the biggest of the blackberries—as big as your thumb—and clutching here and there a handful of huckleberries or blueberries, but never, perchance, suspecting the delicious cool blue-bloomed ones under all. This favorable moist weather has expanded some of the huckleberries to the size of bullets. Each patch, each bush, seems fuller and blacker than the last. Such a profusion, yet you see neither birds nor beasts eating them, unless ants and the huckleberry-bug! I carried my hands full of bushes to the boat, and, returning, the two ladies picked fully three pints from these alone, casting the bare bushes into the stream.

1788: Spain

William Eden was the British ambassador to Spain from 1781–1789. He wrote to his mother on this day and mentions the risk of poisoning from copper and lead cooking vessels.

I was told before I came to this country that it was advisable to be careful in eating at the Spanish tables, because of the frequent use either of copper vessels, or of tin linings mixed with lead. Three days ago some of the ambassadors who dined at Madrid, and a whole company of fourteen people, were dangerously ill on the day following, but they are all recovering.

August 5

OYSTER DAY

According to the old (Julian) calendar, this day was St. James's Day. Oysters could be legally sold in London from this day until the end of April, but excitement at the availability of oysters was not the only reason for the mad dash to the fishmarket at Billingsgate on this day. Londoners believe (or used to believe) that if you eat an oyster on this day today you will not want for money

all year. An old rhyme celebrates the day:

Greengrocers rise at dawn of sun
August the fifth—come haste away
To Billingsgate the thousands run
To Oyster Day! To Oyster Day!

BEER DAY

2007: USA

International Beer Day (IBD) was founded in 2007 in Santa Cruz, California. Since its inception, International Beer Day has grown from a small, localized event in the western United States into a worldwide celebration spanning 207 cities, 50 countries, and 6 continents. Specifically, International Beer Day has three declared purposes:

1. To gather with friends and enjoy the taste of beer.
2. To celebrate those responsible for brewing and serving beer.
3. To unite the world under the banner of beer, by celebrating the beers of all nations together on a single day.

BREAKFAST IN PERSIA

1826: Persia (Iran)

A young man called James Edward Alexander “who had the fortune to be attached to the suite of the British Envoy” made a long journey during which he “enjoyed facilities for observation, especially in Persia, which do not fall to the lot of many travellers.” He later wrote about his experiences in a book with a title that summarizes his itinerary: *Travels from India to England, comprehending a visit to the Burman Empire, and a Journey through Persia, Asia Minor, European Turkey, &c., in the years 1825–26.*

Alexander included a description of a fine example of hospitality shown his party in Persia, a country not visited by many Englishmen of the time.

The greatest attention and civility were shewn us by the Khan of this district, Hajee Alee Khan, who resides in a delightful upper-storied house seated in the midst of a large garden, close to which we were encamped. He invited us to breakfast. After partaking of delicious fruit, piled up in a very neat manner, trays were introduced, containing pillaus, kababs, different preparations from milk, as moss or acidulated milk, clotted cream, curds, cream-cheeses, and milk sherbet, besides six lambs, roasted whole and brought in on the spits, and a variety of other delicacies. For fifteen people there were one hundred and fifty dishes and thirty different kinds of food, amongst which were some excellent preserves.

A RHODE ISLAND BANQUET

1836: Rhode Island, USA

A celebration took place on this day to celebrate the two-hundredth anniversary of the settlement of Providence. According to a contemporary report in *Niles' Historical Register* of 1836, it appears that two banquets were held.

After the oration a hymn was sung, &c, and at 5 o'clock the subscribers with a number of invited guests, sat down to a sumptuous dinner. Previous to this, however, the gentlemen assembled, partook of an Indian banquet, provided under the direction of the committee of arrangements, and designed so far as practical to be in imitation of that usually served up by the sachems on great occasions.

Tradition says, that at the interview had by Williams with Miantonomy, this chief sachem invited him to a regal repast near what is now styled Williams' spring; and the dainties then placed before them, were such as were now offered to the company, which, together with their disposition, were as follow, viz: an Indian mat, being spread out, a large wooden platter well filled with boiled bass, graced the centre, and was supported, on the one side, by a wooden dish of parched corn, and on the other, by a similar one of succotash; beyond the whole, an enormous bowl of wood, flowing to the very brim with pure water, supplied by the self same crystal spring, which of old furnished to the red man his invigorating draught, invitingly

presented itself to the thirsty lookers on, who by means of the antique cup appended to its edge, were furnished with convincing proof that the beverage quaffed by the Indian in his native state, cheered hut did not inebriate.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia.

We cut our meat into slices, and although we were reduced in number, we had become so expert that we had finished a full size bullock by half past eleven AM. The process occupied four of us about four hours and a half; John and Brown were employed in putting it out on the kangaroo net to dry. The strong sea breeze dried it beautifully, but it attracted much moisture again in the night, and was very moist when we packed it into the bags at starting.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1666: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys.

Lords day. . . . So home, and had a good dinner; and after dinner with my wife and Mercer and Jane by the water all the afternoon up as high as Moreclacke . . . at the neat houses I landed and bought a Millon (*melon*) (and we did also land and eat and drink at Wandsworth); and so the Old Swan and there walked home.

1857: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau.

To my surprise found on the dinner-table at Thatcher's the *Vaccinium Oxycoccus*. T. did not know it was anything unusual, but bought it at such a

rate per bushel of Mr. Such-a-one, who brought it to market. They call it the “bog cranberry.” I did not perceive that it differed from the common, unless that it was rather more skinny.

1982: Australia

The novelist Patrick White wrote to the film and theatre director Neil Armfield on this day.

I went again to the heart man last week . . . he wanted to rush me straight to the Prince Henry and have some electric shocks. I refused because I’d planned to make a strudel stuffed with vegetables and a *grune Sosse* (green sauce) at the weekend. I told him I had to have some little frivolity in my life, and this seemed the only way. . . . Today is Manoly’s seventieth birthday. . . . Tonight I’m going to try to make a *timbalo* of ravioli with cream and a chicken liver sauce. This sort of thing is my only recreation these days.

August 6

HOUSTON COUNTY POORHOUSE

1892: USA

The Minnesota State Board of Corrections and Charities received regular reports on the institutions under its purview. On this day, it was the turn of the Houston County Poorhouse to be visited. The report included the bill of fare for the inmates:

There were 11 inmates; 2 men and 9 women. The overseer has no salary but receives only the use of the farm and the board of himself, wife and six children. The overseer furnishes milk and garden stuff for the paupers; the rest of the produce belongs to him. The county pays \$2 per week for one servant girl. This poorhouse is unfit for use. . . . The paupers appeared to be comfortably clothed and well cared for. The following bill of fare was reported: Breakfast, bread and butter, coffee cake, milk on draught, coffee with milk and sugar. Dinner, bread and butter, salt meat, potatoes, beans, apples, tea with sugar. Supper, bread and butter, fried potatoes, tea, milk,

sometimes coffee cake. The overseer seems to be doing as well as could be done with the means at his command.

FOOD & WAR

1917: Britain, WW I

Lord Rhondda, the Food Controller, made an announcement about food policy on this day, which was widely reported in the newspapers:

In letters to the President of the Local Government Board and the Secretary for Scotland, the Food Controller States:

“It is plain at the beginning of the fourth year of the war how vital a part the problem of food supplies is destined to play in the achievement of victory. It will be my endeavour as Food Controller to keep three main principles of policy before me. Supplies must be conserved. Supplies must be shared equally by rich and poor, and prices must be kept down. This policy can only be carried out if it is adopted not only by the Ministry of Food, but also by the nation.”

FOOD & THE LAW

1860: Britain

The Adulteration of Food and Drink Act, the first comprehensive food law in the world, passed into law when it received royal assent on this day. The preamble to the Act stated: “The practice of adulterating articles of food and drink for sale, in fraud of her Majesty’s subjects, and to the great hurt of their health, requires to be repressed by more effectual laws than those which are now in force for that purpose.”

The Act provided that:

Every person who shall sell any article of food or drink with which, to the knowledge of such person, any ingredient or material injurious to the health of persons eating or drinking such article as has been mixed, and every person who shall sell expressly warranted as pure or unadulterated any article of food or drink which is adulterated or not pure,” shall, for every

such offence, forfeit and pay a penalty not exceeding five pounds, nor less than five shillings, together with the costs of conviction.

And if any person so convicted shall afterwards commit the like offence, the justices before whom the case has been proved, may cause the offender's name, place of abode, and offence, to be published in such newspapers, or in such other manner as the Justices may think desirable.

The Act also stipulated that "skilled persons" were to be appointed by local government bodies or courts so that, for a fee, any purchaser of any article of food or drink could have such article analyzed to determine whether or not the article is adulterated, and if so, if it is adulterated sufficiently to be injurious to the health of the consumer.

Two types of offense could be prosecuted under the Act. Firstly, the sale of any article of food or drink which is known by the person selling it to contain something injurious to health, and secondly, the sale of any article of food or drink expressly warranted as pure or unadulterated, which is adulterated or impure.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

1311: London, For Selling Putrid Bread

The Feast of St. Lawrence (August 10) was on Monday in 1311, so the previous Thursday, the date of this offense, was August 6.

The bread taken from William de Somersete, baker, on the Thursday next before the Feast of St. Laurence in the fifth year of the reign of King Edward, was examined and adjudged upon before Richer de Refham, Mayor, Thomas Romayn, John de Wengrave, and other Aldermen; and, because it was found that such bread was putrid, and altogether rotten, and made of putrid wheat, so that persons by eating that bread would be poisoned and choked, the Sheriff was ordered to take him, and have him here on the Friday next after the Feast of St. Laurence; then to receive judgment for the same.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1817: Australia

From John Oxley's journal of his expedition in 1817 to explore the course of the Lachlan River.

Our search after water was not attended with success, but the ground being extremely boggy, we were in hopes of procuring a little by digging. Our spade, which had so unfortunately been left at Bathurst, would now have been of the most essential service, but the carpenter's adze proved a useful substitute. Choosing a place which seemed most likely to have received the drainings of the hills, and on which a little rain-water still remained, we dug a tolerably good well, and in a few hours were rewarded by obtaining near a quart of thick muddy water per man, which by boiling, skimming, and straining, was rendered palatable to persons who must otherwise have gone without their dinner or breakfast the next morning, it being impossible to eat either our bread or pork without something to quench our thirst.

1818: Australia

From John Oxley's journal of his expedition in 1818 to explore the Macquarie River region.

It was half past three o'clock before every thing was removed to the foot of the hill, when it was much too late to think of proceeding, anxious as we were to arrive at the main range itself. We killed this day one of the largest kangaroos we had seen in any part of New South Wales, being from one hundred and fifty to one hundred and eighty pounds weight. These animals live in flocks like sheep; and I do not exaggerate, when I say that some hundreds were seen in the vicinity of this hill; it was consequently named Kangaroo Hill.

1836: USA

From missionary Narcissa Whitman's journal of her journey in 1836 from New York, across the Rocky Mountains, to Oregon and beyond.

Route very bad and difficult to-day. We crossed a small stream full of falls. The only pass where we could cross was just on the edge of rocks above one of the falls. While the pack animals were crossing, both ours and the

... of the same time the pack animals were crossing, soon came the company's, there was such a rush as to crowd two of our horses over the falls, both packed with dried meat. It was with great difficulty they were got out, one of them having been nearly an hour much to his injury. We have a little rice to eat with our dry meat, given us by Mr McLeod, which makes it relish quite well.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1666: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys: "I took them to old Fishstreete, to the very house and room where I kept my wedding-diner, where I never was since; and there did give them a jole of Salmon and what else was to be had."

1793: Wales

From the diaries of John Byng, 5th Viscount Torrington, written during his horseback tours of England and Wales:

Llanrhaedr-ym-Mochmant, Wales . . . some corn was to be had for them [the horses], but nothing for myself, but cheese and butter, (these delights of Welshmen, are worse in Wales than in any country in England);— however a bustling wench said she would find me some eggs—which she cook'd with slices of bacon.

1818: Scotland

John Keats, on a walking holiday in Scotland, wrote to a friend on this day.

I have got wet through day after day, eaten oatcake, & drank whiskey, walked up to my knees in Bog, got a sore throat . . . met with wholesome food, just here and there as it happened. . . . Sometimes when I am rather tired I lean rather languishingly on a Rock, & longing for some famous Beauty to get down from her palfrey in passing; approach me with—her saddle bags—& give me—a dozen or two capital roast beef sandwiches.

August 7

A RAILROAD LUNCHEON

1919: Britain

Passengers aboard the West Coast railroad sat down to the following menu in the dining saloon on this day:

Third Class Car.

Luncheon 3/6

Thick Oxtail

—

Whiting Meunière

—

Roast Mutton

New Potatoes Marrow

—

Apple Tart

—

Cheese, Watercress, Butter, Biscuits, *etc.*

—

Tea or Coffee, per Cup 3d.

FOOD & WAR

1594: Ireland, the Battle of the Ford of the Biscuit

The history of the English determination to subdue the Irish and was already

centuries old when, at the beginning of the Nine Years War in February 1594, English forces captured and garrisoned the Ulster stronghold of Eniskillen Castle. The Irish response was to place the garrison under siege. On August 7 the advancing English relief forces were ambushed at a river crossing known as Arney Ford, by Irish rebels led by the famous Hugh Maguire, Lord of Fermagh and leader of the Maguire clan.

The English were well and truly routed, and the sight of English rations—meant for the relief of Eniskillen castle—littering the battlefield and floating down the bloody river gave the event the name of the “Battle of the Ford of the Biscuit.”

The “biscuits” were not, of course, the modern sweet cookies of Europe, but the traditional military campaign ration of hardtack (or sea-biscuit, in the case of the navy).

William Burney, in *A New Universal Dictionary of the Marine* (London, 1815), described the method of making biscuits on a huge scale for the British Navy in the early nineteenth century.

The process of biscuit-making for the navy is simple and ingenious, and is nearly as follows: A large lump of dough, consisting merely of flower [flour] and water, is mixed up together, and placed exactly in the center of a raised platform, where a man sits on a machine, called a horse, and literally rides up and down throughout its whole circular direction, until the dough is equally indented, and this is repeated till the dough is sufficiently kneaded.

In this state it is handed over to a second workman, who, with a large knife, puts it in a proper state for the use of those bakers who more immediately attend the oven. They are five in number; and their different departments are well calculated for expedition and exactness.

The first man on the farthest side of a large table moulds the dough, until it has the appearance muffins, and which he does two together, with each hand; then delivers them over to the man on the other side of the table, who stamps them on both sides with a mark, and throws them on a smaller table, where stands the third workman, whose business is merely to separate the different pieces into two, and place them under the hand of him who supplies the oven, whose work of throwing or chucking the biscuits on the peel must be performed with the greatest exactness and regularity. The fifth arranges them in the oven, and is so expert, that though the different

biscuits are thrown to him at the rate of seventy in a minute, the peel is always disengaged in time to receive them separately.

So much critical exactness and neat activity occur in the exercise of this layout, that it is difficult to decide whether the palm of excellence is due to the moulder, the maker, the splitter, the chucker, or the depositor; all of them, like the wheels of a machine seeming actuated by the same principle. The business is to deposit in the oven seventy biscuits in a minute; and this is actually accomplished with the regularity of a clock; the clack of the peel, during its motion in the oven, operating it like a pendulum. The biscuits thus baked are kept in repositories, which receive warmth from being placed in drying lofts over the ovens, till they are sufficiently dry to be packed into bags of an hundred weight each, and removed into store-houses for immediate use.

At Deptford, the bakehouse belonging to the victualling-office has twelve ovens each of which bakes twenty shoots daily; the quantity of flour used for each shoot is two bushels, or 112 pounds; which baked, produce 102 pounds of biscuit. Ten pounds are regularly allowed on each shoot for shrinkage, &c. The allowance of biscuit in the navy is one pound for each man per day; so that, at Deptford alone, they can furnish bread, daily, for 24,480 men, independent of Portsmouth and Plymouth.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1797: Africa

From *To the Land of King Cazembe*, the narrative of the travels of Francisco José de Lacerda e Almeida: “The country traversed is so poor that nothing can be procured but millet, sweet potatoes, yams, ground-nuts, and a few bananas: these, however, are abundant and cheap. My only support is rice-water. Not a chicken during my sickness!”

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1788: Spain

William Eden was the British ambassador to Spain from 1781 to 1789. On this

day he wrote a letter to his mother:

I ought to apprise you, among other matters, that the greengage plums are as good as in England, and much more plentiful; the grapes hitherto are sweet, but they have no other merit. I have already told you that the potatoes are excellent I never saw better, even from Liverpool. We have red currant tarts here every day, and it is, I believe, the only place in Spain where red currants are found in any plenty, and the confectioner is at this moment occupied in making black currant jelly, provisionally against colds.

1818: Scotland

Charles Brown, on holiday with his friend Keats, wrote in a letter of the poor food they were offered at an inn.

At last we come, wet and weary, to the long-wished-for inn. What have you for dinner? "Truly nothing." No eggs? "We have two." Any loaf-bread? "No, sir, but we've nice oatcakes." Any bacon? any dried fish? "No, no, no, sir!" But you've plenty of whiskey? "Oh, yes, sir; plenty of whiskey!" This is melancholy. Why should so beautiful a country be poor? Why can't craggy mountains and granite rocks bear corn, wine, and oil? These are our misfortunes; these are what make me "an eagle's talon in the waist." But I am well repaid for my sufferings. We came out to endure, and to be gratified with scenery, and lo! we have not been disappointed either way. As for the oatcakes, I was once in despair about them. I was not only too dainty, but they absolutely made me sick. With a little gulping I can manage them now. Mr Keats, however, is too unwell from fatigue and privation.

August 8

FOOD & WAR

1914: Britain, the Defence of the Realm Act

The Defence of the Realm Act (DORA) was passed in the United Kingdom on August 8, 1914, during the early weeks of World War I. One of the primary aims of the Act when it was first introduced was to prevent food shortages. At the

start of the war, food shortages were self-imposed as the German U-boat campaign had yet to start, but there was already evidence of panic buying and hoarding of food. Some shops sold out of food within a few days in August of 1914. This initial panic-buying settled, however, and generally speaking the supply of food was not a problem in Britain until the end of 1916.

1940: Britain, World War II

From the wartime diary of housewife Nella Last, on her son's birthday:

Arthur's birthday—his twenty-seventh. How the years fly! Today has seemed a kaleidoscope of brightly coloured bits of memory—things I never think of in an ordinary life. I asked him last night what he would like best for a birthday tea. He thought very carefully and then said "Orange whip and Viennese bread." Such a simple wish, and such a boyish one. As oranges with full flavour are difficult to get, and 4d. each, I decided to use Rowntree's orange jelly. I used the juice of four Jaffas in the old 1d. orange days, and 1d. worth of gelatine which now costs about 4d. for the same quantity. I made the jelly with slightly less water than usual, whipped it when cold but not set, and added three stiffly beaten whites of eggs that I had saved from baking. They did not know it was not made from fresh oranges, and I did not say anything when they said it was the "best ever." My Viennese rolls were a delight and I felt so happy about them, for it's some time since I made them as my husband does not like either new or crusty bread. They turned out a lovely golden shell of sweet crust that melted in the mouth, and I put honey on the table to eat with them. I put my fine lace and linen cloth on the table, and a big bowl of deep orange marigolds. There was the birthday cake I made before Easter when butter was more plentiful, and for effect I put a boat-shaped glass dish with goldeny-green lettuce hearts piled in—which were eaten to the last bit.

PLANTER'S PUNCH

1908: USA

The first known print reference to Planter's Punch is in the August 8, 1908, edition of the *New York Times*. Planter's Punch is the name for a rum-based drink which appears to have originated in Jamaica. There is no single, specific

recipe, but aside from the rum, the other usual inclusions are citrus juice (especially lime), sugar, and soda water. There also may be grenadine, curaçao, Angostura bitters, and cayenne pepper. Interestingly, the earliest recipes were often written in rhyme, including the one in the *New York Times* article of 1908.

Planter's Punch

This recipe I give to thee,

Dear brother in the heat.

Take two of sour (lime let it be)

To one and a half of sweet,

Of Old Jamaica pour three strong,

And add four parts of weak.

Then mix and drink. I do no wrong—

I know whereof I speak.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1840: Britain

Edward Downs received Royal Letters Patent on this day for his method of preserving potatoes or other vegetables. The potatoes were first boiled or steamed, “till the skins just show symptoms of cracking.” They were then put into a cylinder, the bottom of which was pierced with small holes, and pressed down by a piston, which forced the potatoes through the holes in the form of small threads or fibers. The potato fibers were then dried.

Edwards' Patent Preserved Potato became a success, and was supplied to many of the voyages and expeditions of the time. A chemist, Dr. Andrew Ure, analyzed the product and was enthusiastic:

Messrs. Edwards' process for concentrating the nutritious powers of potatoes, and preserving their qualities unimpaired for any length of time,

and in any climate, is, in my opinion, the best hitherto devised for that purpose, and, chemically considered, the best possible. I find that one pound of their Patent Potato, when cooked with about three pounds of water, affords a dish equal to a mash of fresh mealy Potatoes. When milk is used instead of water, then a much richer dish is obtained than can be formed from the best ordinary Potatoes boiled, because it is free from the water contained in fresh Potatoes, amounting to fully three-fourths of the Weight. By adding eggs, sugar, and spices, to the milky mash, a delicious pudding may be made. EDWARDS' Patent Potato will be found an invaluable preparation, not only in sea voyages and tropical countries, but at home in the after part of the season, because it continues uniformly wholesome and agreeable, whereas by this time our Potato have become unsound from frost, growth, &c. It also possesses all the antiscorbutic properties of the fresh Potato.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1817: Australia

From John Oxley's journal of his expedition in 1817 to explore the course of the Lachlan River: "Kangaroos of a very large size abound in every direction around us: our dogs killed one weighing seventy or eighty pounds, which proved a great and refreshing acquisition to us."

1836: USA

From missionary Narcissa Whitman's journal of her journey in 1836 from New York, across the Rocky Mountains, to Oregon and beyond.

Snake River. We have an excellent camp ground to-night; plenty of feed for our horses and cattle. We think it remarkable that our cattle should endure the journey as well as they do. We have two suckling calves that appear to be in very good spirits; they suffer some from sore feet—otherwise they have come on well and will go through. Have come eighteen miles to-day and have taken it so deliberately that it has been easy for us. The hunters came in last night well loaded; they had been in the mountains two days after game and killed three elk and two antelope. This is the first elk meat we have had, and it is the last opportunity we expect to have of taking any more game. We are told that many have traveled the whole distance from

more game. We are told that many have traveled the whole distance from Rendezvous to Walla Walla without any fresh meat. We think our will last until we reach the salmon fishing at Snake Falls. Thus we are well provided for contrary to our expectations. Mr McLeod has excellent hunters; this is the reason why we live so well. There is but little game and that is found at a great distance from the route.

August 9

PRESIDENTIAL BREAKFAST

1974: USA

Henry Haller was the White House chef for twenty-one years, and in an interview after his retirement, told a story about one of the most significant meals he served there. It was not one of the approximately 250 state dinners for which he had catered, but about President Richard Nixon's breakfast on this day.

Haller described finding the president, still dressed in his pajamas, outside the kitchen of the family quarters at 6:00 am. Nixon followed Haller into the kitchen, where he shook the chef's hand, saying "Chef, I have dined all over the world, but your food is the best." He then ordered not his usual breakfast of wheat germ and coffee, but corned-beef hash with a poached egg, and asked that this be served in the Lincoln Sitting Room.

When the president had finished his breakfast, the White House chief of staff, Alexander Haig, entered, bearing a short document, which the president signed.

The paper contained a short sentence: "I hereby resign the Office of the President of the United States." President Nixon signed his resignation, to be delivered at 11:35 am to the American public and the rest of the world.

FOOD & WAR

1776: American Revolutionary War. Rations for the Pennsylvania "Flying Camp" Battalion

The Flying Camps were reserve battalions organized in several states in response to General Washington's call for more troops. Pennsylvania was called on to

to General Washington's call for more troops. Pennsylvania was called on to provide six thousand men, and the following is the order for rations for those troops.

In CONVENTION for the STATE of Pennsylvania.

FRIDAY, August 9, 1776.

On Motion, Ordered,

THAT Two thousand Copies of the Particulars of the Rations allowed for the FLYING CAMP,

be printed and distributed among the Men.

Extract from the Minutes,

JOHN MORRIS, jun. Secretary.

The RATION for each Man, as copied from the Minutes of the Honourable the Contintental CONGRESS, is as follows,

- One Pound of Beef, or Three Quarters of a Pound of Pork, or One Pound of Salt Fish, per Day.
- One Pound of Bread or Flour per Day.
- Three Pints of Peas or Beans per Week, or Vegetables equivalent at One Dollar per Bushel for Peas or Beans.
- One Pint of Milk per Man per Day, or at the Rate of 1/72 of a Dollar.
- One Half-pint of Rice, or One Pint of Indian Meal, per Man per Week,
- One Quart of Spruce Beer, or Cyder, per Man per Day, or Nine Gallons of Molasses per
- Company of 100 Men per Week.
- Three Pounds of Candles to 100 Men per Week, for Guards.
- Twenty-four Pounds of Soft or Eight Pounds of Hard Soap for 100

Men per Week.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1585: At Sea

From *The First Voyage of Master John Davis, Undertaken in June, 1585, for the discovery of the North-West Passage*, written by John James Marchant, servant to the Worshipful Master William Sanderson.

The 9th [August] our men fell in dislike of their allowance because it was so small as they thought. Whereupon we made a new proportion, every mess, being five to a mess, should have four pound of bread a day, twelve wine quarts of beer, six new land fishes, and the flesh days a gin of pease more; so we restrained them from their butter and cheese.

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia.

When Charley returned with the horses, he told us, that, when he was sitting down to drink at a water-hole about three miles up the creek, ten emus came to the other side of the water; keeping himself quiet, he took a careful aim, and shot one dead; then mounting his horse immediately, he pursued the others, and approaching them very near, succeeded in shooting another. He broke the wings of both and concealed them under water. It is a singular custom of the natives, that of breaking the wings upon killing an emu; as the wings could only slightly assist the animal in making its escape, should it revive. But in conversation with Brown as to the possibility of one of the emus having escaped, he said very seriously: "Blackfellow knows better than white fellow; he never leaves the emu without breaking a wing. Blackfellows killed an emu once, and went off intending to call their friends to help them to eat, and when they came back, they looked about, looked about, but there was no emu; the emu was gone—therefore the Blackfellows always broke the wings of the emus they killed afterwards." This was, however, very probably one of Brown's yarns, made up for the occasion.

I sent Mr Calvert and Charley to fetch the game, whilst we loaded the bullocks, and by the time they returned, we were ready to start. The emus were fine large birds, but not fat; this season seemed to be unfavourable for them.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1660: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys.

[A]nd from thence to Mrs. Blackburne again, who did treat my wife and I with a great deal of civility and did give us a fine collation of a collar of beef &c. Thence, having my head full of drink through having drunk so much Rhenish wine in the morning and more in the afternoon at Mrs. Blackburne. Came home and so to bed, not well; and very ill all night.

1661: England

John Evelyn's diary entry on this day is one of the earliest mentions of the pineapple in English: "I first saw the famous Queen Pine brought from Barbados and presented to his Majestie; but the first that were ever seen in England were those sent to Cromwell House foure years since."

Evelyn twice mentions the pineapple in his diary: on July 19 (see entry for that date), it is the "King Pine" (considered inferior to the Queen). Pineapple remained a rarity for a long time in England, as they could not withstand the long voyage from the tropics.

The first known written recipe using pineapple as an ingredient is in Richard Bradley's *The Country Housewife and Lady's Director*, published in 1736.

To make a Tart of the Ananas, or PineApple from Barbadoes

Take a PineApple, and twist off its Crown: then pare it free from the Knots, and cut it in Slices about half an Inch thick; then stew it with a little Canary wine, or Madera Wine, and some Sugar, till it is thoroughly hot, and it will distribute its Flavour to the Wine much better than any thing we can add to it. When it is as one would have it, take it from the Fire; and when it is cool,

put it into a sweet Paste, with its Liquor, and bake it gently a little while, and when it comes from the Oven, pour Cream over it (if you have it) and serve it either hot or cold.

August 10

SAINT LAWRENCE (LORENZO) FEAST DAY

Saint Lawrence is the patron saint of cooks on account of the traditional story that he met his martyrdom by being roasted to death. He is particularly favored in Florence, Italy, and the famous dish *Bistecca Fiorentina* is associated with the day. Legend says that many centuries ago, on his feast day, some English visitors tasted the local highly prized beef which was being grilled in the great Square of San Lorenzo. They demanded more, calling out “beef steak, beef steak, beef steak.” The phrase became *bistecca*, and a local specialty and tradition was born.

U.S. STATE FOOD

1987: New York

Governor Cuomo signed into law a bill declaring the apple muffin to be the official state muffin. The choice represented successful lobbying campaign by a student group calling itself the “Apple Muffin Gang” at the Bear Road Elementary School in North Syracuse.

On the same day, Cuomo signed legislation banning the sale of candy and soft drink in public schools until the end of lunch hour. Other snack foods such as ice-creams, cookies, and potato chips were, however, still allowed to be sold during lunchtime—a decision which upset candy and soft-drink manufacturers, who claimed it was “nutritionally irrational.”

THE COST OF COFFEE

1937: Brazil

The National Coffee Department of Brazil regularly burned a significant proportion of the coffee crop since 1931 to maintain higher prices. From 1931–

proportion of the coffee crop since 1931, to maintain higher prices. From 1931-1936, \$250,000,000 worth of coffee was destroyed.

In 1937–1938 there was a bumper coffee crop, and it was estimated that there would be a 10,000,000 sack surplus—on top of the stores already at hand. It was decided to put only 30 percent of the crop on the market, the remaining coffee to be burned or dumped in the ocean (30 percent) or stored (40 percent).

MUSTARD

1390: Dijon, France

An ordinance of this date established the rules governing mustard-making. Mustard was an enormously popular and important condiment of the time, and an essential accompaniment to brawn and other cold meat dishes. Mustard-making was already a huge industry in the region of Dijon, and the order was no doubt intended to maintain the quality and reputation of the product.

FOOD & WAR

1861: American Civil War, Confederate Rations

General Orders No. 54, dated this day, specified the daily ration for Confederate soldiers to be:

- 22 ounces of soft bread or flour, or 1 pound of hardbread;
- 1 pound 4 ounces salt or fresh beef or 12 ounces of pork or bacon
- 1 pound of potatoes three times per week whenever practicable
- To every 100 rations 15 pounds beans or peas AND 10 pounds rice or hominy; 10 pounds green coffee or 8 pounds roasted coffee; 1 pound 8 ounces tea; 15 pounds sugar; 4 quarts vinegar; 3 pounds 12 ounces salt; 4 ounces pepper; and 1 quart molasses.

By July 7, 1863, this was modified to 12 ounces pork or bacon; 1 pound 4 ounces fresh or salt beef; 18 ounces soft bread or flour, or 12 ounces hardbread, or 1 pound 4 ounces of corn meal.

The field rations consisted of 1 pound of hardbread and desiccated or compressed potatoes or mixed vegetables, at the rate of 1 1/2 ounces of the former and 1 ounce of the latter for each ration of beans, rice, peas, or hominy.

When necessary, fresh fruits and vegetables, dried fruits, molasses, pickles, or any other proper food might be purchased and issued in lieu of any other component.



Drawing of Confederate soldiers sharing rations

(Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division [Reproduction number e.g., LC-DIG-ppmsca-21488])

1917: USA, World War I, the Food & Fuel Control Act

This wartime act created the U.S. Food Administration and the Federal Fuel Administration. Its passage through the legislative process was urged by President Wilson as a wartime emergency measure.

The bill received strong opposition from some who feared the power that it would grant to the president. The president was to be empowered to restrict the manufacture of alcoholic beverages from agricultural products—essentially a form of prohibition. The bill also authorized the president to “use any agency or agencies, to accept the services of any person without compensation, to cooperate with any person or persons in relation to the processes, methods, activities of and for the production manufacture, procurement, storage, distribution, sale, marketing, pledging, financing, and consumption of

necessaries which are declared to be affected with a public interest.”

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1805: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day Joseph Whitehouse wrote: “We now begin to live on fresh meat & that poor venison & goat meat at this time. As our fatigues [are] hard we find that poor meat alone is not Strong diet, but we are content with what we can git . . . the hunters killed only one deer this day.”

ANNIVERSARY

1849: USA

This was the birthday of Horace Fletcher (died 1919), a nineteenth-century health-food guru nicknamed “The Great Masticator,” on account of his theory that every mouthful of food should be chewed thirty-two times before swallowing. If it was done, then less food would be needed, but increased strength and intelligence would result. If, on the other hand, this was not done, then “Nature will castigate those who don’t masticate.” “Fletcherism” became a very popular food fad of the time, with many well-known persons amongst its adherents.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1786: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde.

Nancy and myself very busy this morning in making the Charter having some company to dine with us—But unfortunately the Cellar Door being left open whilst it was put in there to cool, one of the Greyhounds (by name Jigg) got in and eat the whole, with a Cold Tongue &c. Sister Pounsett and Nancy mortally vexed at it. . . . We had for Dinner some Maccarel, boiled Beef, a Couple of Ducks rosted and a Barberry Tart.

Charter: Woodforde mentions this dish in his diary on several occasions. He ate it first in 1777, at the house of a colleague. It was been assumed for a long time that it was some sort of sweet custard-type dish, but the following recipe suggests otherwise.

Charter Pie (Cornish Recipe)

Take 3 or 4 very young chickens and cut them in quarters—season with salt only: let a good quantity of parsley be picked from the stalks, boil it in milk, and chop it very small. Put the whole into a dish with a quantity of thick cream, put paste over the dish, and bake it. Before it is sent to table, put a pint of hot cream into the pie.

—*A Few Choice Receipts* (1883), by Sarah Lindsay.

August 11

A NEW ZEALAND BANQUET

1888: Wellington, New Zealand

Various industrial protection associations in New Zealand organized an exhibition to showcase the nation's products. A banquet was held on this day which "proved quite as successful as the most sanguine of the promoters had anticipated." The newspapers proudly announced that "the banquet was, without doubt, the largest ever held in Wellington, and the spectacle was one which those present will not readily efface from their memory."

About one thousand persons sat down to a cold collation in the Volunteer Drill Shed. The *Evening Post* reported:

Every article of consumption on the tables, with the exception of salt and mustard, which are not manufactured in the colony, were produced in New Zealand, and the Protection League could not have adopted a better plan of showing the public what the country is capable of turning out than by placing the articles before the people and allowing them to judge for themselves.

The menu was as follows: Poultry: roast fowl and roast duck. Joints: roast

beef, roast mutton, roast pork, spiced beef, ox tongues, and boiled ham.
Entrees: quail pie, rabbit pie, veal and ham pie, steak pie. Salads.
Entremets: apple pie, gooseberry pie, trifle, semolina pudding, apricot pie,
plum pie, tipsy cake, jam tarts, black currant pie, peach pie, blanc mange,
Swiss rolls, Des[s]ert.

The food was well cooked, and there was enough on the tables to have fed half as many more. The liquors consisted of draught ale, aerated and mineral waters, and tea brewed from leaves grown in the Auckland district.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1903: USA

Satori Kato, a Japanese American chemist living in Chicago, was granted Patent No. 735,777 for a “Coffee Concentrate and Process of Making Same.” His process resulted in dry coffee mass which could be pulverized or made into cakes—an early version of instant coffee.

The invention relates more particularly to the production in a hard dry state of a coffee concentrate which is not liable to become rancid and which does not owe its resistance to rancidity nor its hard dry state to the presence therein of foreign matter or fiber, but which may consist entirely of the aromatic and healthful constituents of the coffee-bean.

The coffee concentrate thus obtained embodies all of the pleasant and desirable properties of coffee-beans in a perfectly-pure and unadulterated state and entirely free from the unpleasant and insoluble constituents, and this concentrate will preserve its aroma indefinitely.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1836: USA

From missionary Narcissa Whitman’s journal of her journey in 1836 from New York, across the Rocky Mountains, to Oregon and beyond.

Tuesday and Wednesday have been tedious days, both for man and beast—lengthy marches without water, rocky and sandy. Had a present to-night of

lengthy marches without water, rocky and sandy. Had a present to night of a fresh salmon; also a plate of fried cakes from Mr McLeod. (Girls, if you wish to know how they taste you can have pleasure by taking a little flour and water, make some dough, and roll it thin, cut it into square blocks, then take some beef fat and fry them. You need not put either salt or pearlsh in your dough.) Believe me, I relish them as well as I ever did any made at home.

1912: Antarctica

From the diary of Douglas Mawson's Antarctic expedition of 1911–1913.

[W]hile we were excavating some buried kerosene, Jones sighted a group of seven Emperor penguins two miles away over the western floe. Taking a sledge and camera we made after them. A mile off, they saw us and advanced with their usual stately bows. It seemed an awful shame to kill them, but we were sorely in need of fresh meat. The four we secured averaged seventy pounds in weight and were a heavy load up the steep rise to the glacier; but our reward came at dinner-time.

With several fine days to give us confidence, everything was made ready for the sledge journey on August 20. The party was to consist of six men and three dogs, the object of the journey being to lay out a food-depot to the east in view of the long summer journey we were to make in that direction. Hoadley and Kennedy were to remain at the Base, the former to finish the geological shaft and the latter for magnetic work. There remained also a good deal to do preparing stores for later sledge journeys.

The load was to be one thousand four hundred and forty pounds distributed over three sledges; two hundred pounds heavier than on the March Journey, but as the dogs pulled one sledge, the actual weight per man was less.

The rations were almost precisely the same as those used by Shackleton during his Expedition, and the daily allowance was exactly the same—thirty-four ounces per man per day. For his one ounce of oatmeal, the same weighs of ground biscuit was substituted; the food value being the same. On the second depot journey and the main summer journeys, a three-ounce glaxo biscuit was used in place of four and a half ounces of plasmon biscuit. Instead of taking cheese and chocolate as the luncheon ration, I took chocolate alone, as on Shackleton's southern journey it was found more

satisfactory than the cheese, though the food value was practically the same.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1665: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys.

Late up at it, and weary and full of wind, finding perfectly that so long as I keep myself in company at meals and do there eat lustily, which I cannot do alone, having no love to eating, but my mind runs upon my business, I am as well as can be; but when I come to be alone, I do not eat in time, nor enough, nor with any good heart, and I immediately begin to be full of wind, which brings me pain, till I come to fill my belly a-days again; then am presently well.

1728: England

From John Baptist Grano, a musician in debtors' prison. Prisoners who could afford to do so were able to send out for food: "[S]ent out for a Fowl Bacon and Cabbige for Dinner."

1788: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde: "Mr. Walker and Betsey Davy came over . . . dined and spent the Afternoon with us. . . . We spent a very agreeable day together. We had for Dinner a boiled Leg of Mutton and Capers, a Couple of rost Chicken, Apple Pye and black Currants for a Desert."

Mutton with capers was a classic combination even before Woodford's time, and continued to be an English favorite for at least another two hundred years afterward. The capers were added to the dish in a number of ways. In the following recipe from Woodforde's time, the capers are added to a classic melted butter base.

To boil Mutton

Mutton should be boiled a quarter of an hour to a pound; serve it with

mutton should be boiled a quarter of an hour to a pound. serve it with mashed turnips and carrots, or caper sauce—or to a neck, eschalot sauce.

Caper Sauce

Take some capers, chop half of them, put the rest in whole; chop also a little parsley very fine, with a little bread grated very fine, and some salt; put these into butter melted very smooth. Some only chop the capers a little, and put them into the butter.

—*The lady's assistant for regulating and supplying her table* (1777), by Charlotte Mason

1838: USA

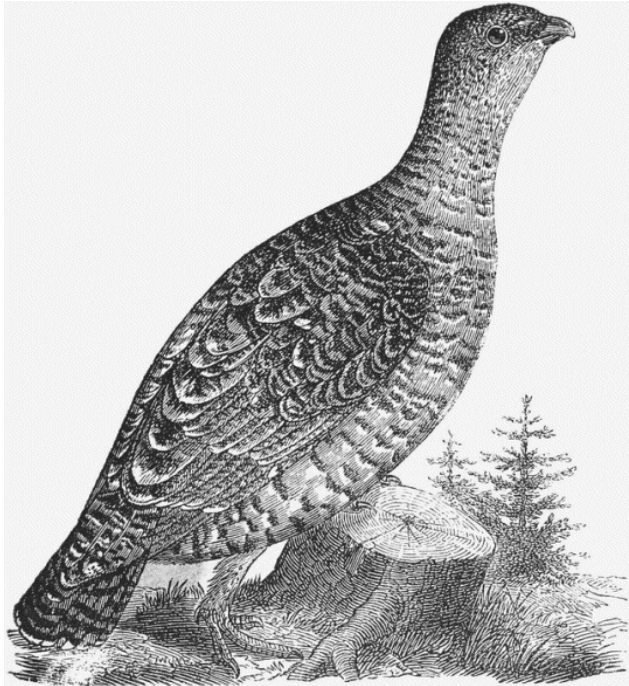
From Nathaniel Hawthorne's *American Journals*.

There is an old man, selling the meats of butternuts under the stoop of the hotel. . . . His nuts were contained in a square tin box, having two compartments, one for the nuts, and another for maple sugar, which he sells in small cakes. He had three small tin measures for nuts, one at one cent, others at two, four, and six cents. . . . I asked him what his sales amounted to in the course of a day. He said that butternuts did not sell so well as walnuts, which are not yet in season; that he might to-day have sold fifty cents' worth; of walnuts, never less than a dollar's worth, often more; and when he went round with a caravan, he had sold fifteen dollars' worth per day, and once as much as twenty dollars' worth.

August 12

THE “ GLORIOUS TWELFTH ”

Britain



Grouse

August 12 is the start of the grouse hunting season in Scotland and the north of England. There is a great race to get the first grouse to restaurants in London, where chefs are on standby to cook and serve them to eager guests. It seems that there is a race to get the little game birds to New York also, as the following article in *The Scotsman*, on August 14, 1950, indicates.

Grouse Go by 'Plane for New York Luncheon

While grouse are reported to be plentiful in most areas, there was a marked absence of shooting parties when the season opened on Saturday. In the West Highlands and the Islands, rain delayed shoots.

Birds shot on the Badenoch moors on the first day were served for lunch in the exclusive 21 Club, New York, yesterday. They were sent by Mr Ewen Ormiston, of Northmore, Inverness, who arranged for 50 brace to be sent by Transatlantic 'plane from Prestwich Airport.

Poulterers in Edinburgh received fair supplies, and these were sold at prices up to 25s and 30s per brace. It was explained that prices are usually highest on the first day of shooting, as there is keen competition for the limited

number of birds available.

DINNER AT THE ACADEMIC CLUB

1784: London, England

The members of the Royal Society were in the habit of meeting socially at one or other of the taverns in London. Each was allowed to bring two guests. Forty sat down to the social dinner which took place on this day. Sir Joseph Banks presided. A French guest noted the proceedings:

The dishes were of the solid kind, such as roast beef, boiled beef and mutton prepared in various ways, with abundance of potatoes and other vegetables, which each person seasoned as he pleased with the different sauces which were placed on the table in bottles of various shapes.

The beef-steaks and the roast were at first drenched with copious bumpers of strong beer, called porter, drunk out of cylindrical pewter pots, which are much preferred to glass, because one can swallow a whole pint at a draught.

This prelude being finished, the cloth was removed and a handsome and well-polished table was covered, as if by magic, with a number of fine crystal decanters, filled with the best port, madeira, and claret; this last is the wine of Bordeaux. Several glasses, as brilliant in lustre as fine in shape, were distributed to each person, and libations began on a grand scale, in the midst of different kinds of cheese, which, rolling in mahogany boxes from one end of the table to another, provoked the thirst of the drinkers. . . .

According to this custom, one must as drink as many times as there are guests, for it would be thought a want of politeness in England to the health of more persons than one at a time.

A few bottles of champagne completed the enlivenment of every one. Tea came next, together with bread and butter and all the usual accompaniments; Coffee followed, humbly yielding preference to the tea, though it be the better of the two.

Brandy, rum, and some other strong liqueurs, closed this philosophic banquet.

Soals	Fruit Pye
Chickens Boild	Sallad
Pye	A Lambs head and minced
Bacon and Greens	Collyflower
Cold Ribs of Lamb	Chine of Mutton R ^t .
Veal Cutlets	Pye
Potatoes	Soals
Rabbits and Onions	

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1930: USA

Clarence Birdseye, for Frosted Foods Company Inc. (a General Foods subsidiary) was granted Patent No. 1,773,079 for a “Method of Preparing Food Products” by quick-freezing the product “into a frozen block in which the pristine qualities and flavors of the product are retained for a substantial period after the block has been thawed.” The patent specifications summarized the method as follows:

My invention relates to methods of treating food products by refrigerating the same, preferably by “quick” freezing the product into a frozen block, in which the pristine qualities and flavors are retained for a substantial period after the block has been thawed.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

1298: London, a Baker Forced to Pay Restitution in the Form of Bread

The Feast of St. Lawrence (August 10) was on Monday in 1298, so the following Wednesday was August 12.

Be it remembered, that on Wednesday next after the feast of St Lawrence, Juliana la Pestour (i.e. Baker) of Nuetone, brought a cart laden with six shillings' worth of bread into West Chepe; of this bread, that which was light breads was wanting in weight, according to the assize of the halfpenny loaf, to the amount of 25 shillings. And of the said six shillings' worth, three shillings' worth was brown bread; which bread was of the right assize. It was therefore adjudged, that the same should be deliviered to the aforesaid Juliana, by Henry Galeys, Mayor of London, Thomas Romeyn, and other Aldermen. And the other three shillings' worth, by award of the said Major and Aldermen, was ordered to be given to the prisoners

FOOD & WAR

1940: Britain, World War II

A new wartime food order came into effect on this day. Under the order, it was to be an offense punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, to waste food. *The Times* had summarized the major points of the order a few days previously:

Under the present Order, the penalties will be: On summary conviction, imprisonment not exceeding three months, or a fine not exceeding £100, or both; on conviction on indictment, imprisonment not exceeding two years, or a fine not exceeding £500, or both.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Food, Mr. Boothby, said "The Order was not intended as a scourge, but only as a general direction to the public not to waste food. It is not going to be harshly interpreted, I can guarantee that."

The first person to be charged with an offense under the Act was a Mrs. Lillian Van Ryn, on December 19 of the same year. She was fined £3 for her failure to repair damages to her bakery, which resulted in the ruining of enough flour to make 4,700 loaves of bread.



World War I USA victory gardens

(Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division [Reproduction number e.g., LC-USZ62-100307])

ANNIVERSARY

1856: New York City

This was the birthday of James Buchanan Brady, known as “Diamond Jim” Brady, an American businessman, financier, and philanthropist. Brady was known for his collection of diamond jewelry and for his gargantuan appetite. He was known to eat six or seven giant lobsters, dozens of oysters, clams, and crabs, two ducks, steak, and desserts at a single sitting. He would also mash a pound of caviar into his baked potatoes.

At one dinner party in February 1910, he ate, as only part of his meal, five

helpings of roast beef, gallons of stewed fruit, 84 oysters, and five gallons of orange juice (which, being a teetotaler, he called his “golden nectar”).

George Rector, a New York restaurateur, said of Diamond Jim that “he was the best twenty-five customers I ever had.”

IN THE WORKHOUSE

1835: England

A regular inspection visit was made on this day to the workhouse at Hatfield. The report was presented at the Sheffield Sessions, along with many other reports, in October of the same year. Part of the report included details of the food situation in the house.

- Breakfast—Milk Porridge or boiled Meat
- Dinner—Potato Pie with Beef and Bacon 2 Days
- Broth and Dumplings 2 Days
- Beef and Bacon 2 Days
- Generally Pie—Sundays
- Supper same as Breakfast
- The Women find their own Tea—The Men their own Tobacco.
- No small Beer.
- About 20 lbs. of Butcher’s Meat per Week including Bone and Suet.
- About 72 Stone of Bacon consumed in a Year, or 1 Stone 5 lb. per week.
- There are at present 6 old Men—14 Women and one Boy.
- The Contractor has nothing to do with the Profits of their Labour, nor is any work found for them—The Women do the Work of the House,

and some few can spin—the Men, or such of them are as able, are employed upon the Roads.

- In truth the Men are usually old and past Work.
- The Bread is baked once a Week.
- The Inside of the House whitewashed twice a Year.
- The Beds taken down once a Summer.
- The clothing belongs to the Parish.
- No other Parish joins this Workhouse.
- The Parish pays about 18 or 20 Guineas per Annum for Medical Attendance upon the Poor residing in the Parish—the House is included.
- When out of the House the Overseers are to determine who are to receive this attendance gratis.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia.

The slopes of the water-holes were steep and boggy, and one of our bullocks was so exhausted that he slipped on the steep banks, rolled into the water, and got so severely bogged, that we were compelled to kill him, after trying everything in our power to extricate him. On the 12th August we cut him up. The night, however, was very foggy with heavy dew, which prevented the meat from drying. The miserably exhausted state of the animal had rendered the meat very flabby and moist, and it not only dried badly, but was liable to taint and to get fly-blown.

1836: USA

From missionary Narcissa Whitman's journal of her journey in 1836 from New York, across the Rocky Mountains, to Oregon and beyond.

[R]aised camp this morning at sunrise and came two hours ride to the salmon fishery. Found a few lodges of Diggers, of the Snake tribe, so called because they live on roots during winter, who had just commenced fishing. Obtained some and boiled it for our breakfast. Find it good eating; had we been a few days earlier we should not have been able to obtain any fish, for they had but just come up. They never go higher than these falls and come here every season.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1830: USA

An Englishman, John Downe, emigrated to America to find work as a weaver, intending to earn enough to send for his wife and children. On this day he wrote home to tell his family that he had gained employment. In the letter he also described his food experiences in New York.

My dear wife, I have got a situation in a Factory, in a very pleasant vale about 7 miles from Hudson, and I am to have the whole management of the factory and the master is going to board me till you come in his house. A Farmer took me one day in his waggon into the country, from Hudson, to see a factory, and I dined with him, and he would not have a farthing, and told me I was welcome to come to his house at any time; they had on the table pudding, pyes, and fruit of all kind that was in season, and preserves, pickles, vegetables, meate and everything that a person could wish, and the servantes set down at the same table with their masters. They do not think of locking the doors in the country, and you can gather peaches, applies, and all kind of fruit by the side of the roads. And I can have a barrel of cider holding 32 gallons, for 4s, and they will lend me the barrel till I have emptied it. And I can have 100 lbs. of Beef for 10s. English money. Lamb is about five farthings the pound, and the butcher brings it to your door. . . .I went into the market yesterday at New York, and on the outside of the market there were bullocks' and sheep and lambs' head laying underfoot like dogs' meat. They cut the tongue, and throw the rest away. And I can go into a store, and have as much brandy as I like to drink for the halfpence and all other spirits in proportion. If a man like work he need not want

victuals.

Now, my dear, if you can get the Parish to pay for your passage, come directly; for I have not a doubt in my mind I shall be able to keep you in credit. . . . I know that you will like America. America is not like England; for here no man think himself your superior.

August 13

DINNER TO THE ASTRONAUTS

1969: Los Angeles

A dinner in honor of the Apollo 11 astronauts was given on this day by President Nixon, at Century Plaza. It was referred to by the *Los Angeles Times* as “The Dinner of the Century . . . one of the largest, most prestigious, and most publicized state dinners in history.”

Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, Michael Collins, their wives, and the widows of several other astronauts were present, and the men from the Apollo mission were awarded the Medal of Freedom on the night.

Fifteen hundred guests attended the dinner, including a total of fifty astronauts, forty-four governors, all U.S. Cabinet members but one, members of the Supreme Court, diplomats from over ninety countries, and many representatives from the aviation, space, entertainment, and political spheres.

Dinner

Supreme of Salmon Commodore

Wente Brothers Pinot Chardonnay

Filet of Beef Perigourdine

Artichauds Columbia

Compliments of the

Carottes Des Indes

Inglenook Cabernet Sauvignon

Limestone Lettuce

Fromages de Brie, Bel Paese, Roquefort

Korbel Natural

Claire de Lune

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1889: USA

Hanson Goodrich, of McLeansborough, Illinois, was granted Patent No. 408707 for a Coffee Pot. His improvement was an attachment which he claimed

can be applied to any coffee-pot now in use, and can be readily adjusted to the height of the same or to the level of water therein. The hot water percolating through the coffee will extract the full strength of the coffee, and at the same time will produce a liquid which will be free of all grounds or other impurities, so that it is not necessary to use any clearing materials.

1957: USA

The Noda Shoyu Co. Ltd. registered the “Kikkoman” trademark in the United States for its soy and other sauces on this day, stating first use in 1885. The name comes from the Japanese *Kikko*, meaning tortoise shell (represented in the logo as a hexagon shape), and *man*, which means “ten thousand” and whose character appears in the middle of the hexagon. The tortoise is considered a symbol of longevity, so the logo is symbolic of the constancy and long history of the product.

FOOD CERTIFICATION

2007: Columbia

Coffee produced by the *Federación Nacional de Cafeteros de Colombia* was granted Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) status on this day. It was the first non-European Union product to be granted this protection.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1805: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day Meriwether Lewis wrote:

[B]y this time it was late in the evening and we had not taisted any food since the evening before. The Chief informed us that they had nothing but berries to eat and gave us some cakes of serviceberries and Choke cherries which had been dryed in the sun; of these I made a hearty meal . . . on my return to my lodge an indian called me in to his bower and gave me a small morsel of the flesh of an antelope boiled, and a piece of a fresh salmon roasted; both which I eat with a very good relish. this was the first salmon I had seen and perfectly convinced me that we were on the waters of the Pacific Ocean.

August 14

FIESCHI'S CAKE DAY

1230: Italy

On this day, Count Opizzi Fieschi married the Siennese noblewoman Bianca De' Bianca. The celebrations were spectacular, and the count had a huge cake made for the enjoyment of the townspeople. In 1949, the town revived the idea, and annually since then, a day of great medieval reenactment activities has been held. Numbered "twinned" tickets are sold for pieces of a huge cake (the recipe is a secret) which are offered to those who have found the matching half of the

ticket in the crowd.

FOOD POLICY

1917: USA

The Grain Corporation, an agency of the U.S. Food Administration, was created. Two years later it was reorganized as the U.S. Grain Corporation, with the functions remaining the same, the main one being regulation of the grain trade. The corporation played a major role in the war effort, cooperating with the War Trade Board to control the import and export of grain, and serving a major administrative role in the post-war Commission for Relief in Belgium.

It was finally abolished on December 31, 1927.

2000: Tashkent

Uzbekistan president Islam Karimov signed a decree on this day “on measures to regulate the import and sale of socially-important food products.”

With the purpose of reliable and uninterrupted provisions toward a domestic consumer market with the basic socially-important food products (mostly imported and not produced domestically) and the creation of an efficient mechanism for their importation and sale,” the decree set up a specialized state-owned company *Uzovkattaminot* which will provide to consumers with sugar, vegetable oil, and other basic foods, making this company the largest public importer of food products in Uzbekistan.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1834: Britain

Jacob Perkins is credited with receiving the first refrigeration patent. Originally from Massachusetts, he had moved to Britain, and British Patent No. 66,621,834 was granted for an “Improvement in the Apparatus and Means for Producing Ice, and in Cooling Fluids.” His machine was for a closed-cycle vapor-compression machine.

1990: USA, Volcano Cookie

The Nabisco Corporation received Patent No. 4948602 for a “Filled Cookie” with a two-phase interior filling—one oil-based and one water-based. When heated in a microwave, the cookie “erupts like a volcano,” the flow of filling then solidifying down the sides of the cookie.

FOOD & WAR

1918: Britain, World War I

The English *Daily News* of this day compared the foods available in London and Berlin.

A Food Contrast

	<i>London</i>	<i>Berlin</i>
Butter and Margarine	5oz.	2¼ oz.
Meat	Aver. 16 oz*	8¼ oz.
Sugar	8 oz.	6¼ oz.
Potatoes	Unrationed	3 lb.4½ oz.
Bread	Unrationed	3 lb. 13¼ oz.

*Many kinds of meat are ration free

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769: Polynesia

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks. Immediately after his short journal entry on this day there is a long essay on the customs of the South Sea Islanders. Banks notes their method of cooking in pits.

Cookery seems to have been little studied here: they have only two methods of applying fire, broiling, or baking as we call it which is done thus. A hole is dug in depth and size according to what is to be prepared seldom exceeding a foot in depth, in this a heap is made of wood and stones alternately laid; fire is then put to it which by the time it has consumed the wood has heated the stones sufficiently just enough to discolour any thing which touches them. The heap is then divided; half is left in the hole the bottom of which is paved with them, on them any kind of provisions are laid always neatly wrapped up in leaves, the whole is then covered with leaves on which are laid the remaining hot stones then leaves again 3 or 4 inches thick and over them any ashes rubbish or dirt that lays at hand. In this situation it remains about 2 hours in which time I have seen a middling hog very well done, Indeed I am of opinion that victuals dressed this way are more juicy if not more Equally done than by any of our European methods, large fish more especially. Bread fruit cooked in this manner becomes soft and something like a boiled potatoe, tho not quite so farinaceous as a good one yet more so than the middling sort. Of this 2 or 3 dishes are made by beating it with a stone pestil till it make a paste, mixing water or Cocoa nut liquor with it and adding ripe plantains, bananas, sour paste *etc.*

1817: Australia

From John Oxley's journal of his expedition in 1817 to explore the course of the Lachlan River. They meet two young Aboriginal youths near Bathurst.

All this time they were paying great attention to the roasting of their opossums, and when they were scarcely warm through, they opened them, and, taking out the fat of the entrails, presented it to us as the choicest morsel; on our declining to receive it they ate it themselves, and again covered up the opossums in the hot ashes. When they were apparently well done, they laid them, the snake, and the things we had presented them with, on the ground, making signs that they wished to go; which of course we allowed them to do, together with their little store of provisions and such

things as we were able to spare them.

1819: USA

Alonzo Delano (1809–1874) travelled overland to California in 1849–1851.

Among the pleasant acquaintances which I made on this journey, was that of Colonel Kinkead and family. . . . When I was about returning, he invited me in such a hearty, cordial manner to stay and dine, that I could not refuse. Had it been at his home, I should have felt no delicacy in accepting the invitation; But here, three or four hundred miles from any supplies, where but few have more than they actually required for themselves, I felt like an intruder; but the Colonel would accept of no apology.

In addition to our usual traveling fare, with an excellent cup of coffee we had a delicious pie, made of a nameless (to me) fruit, which grows in abundance along the river in this part of the valley. It is about the size of a currant, growing in clusters on shrubs from four to ten feet high, and its taste partakes of the flavor of both the currant and cherry. It is as agreeable as either, and made into pies, or stewed, is delicious. Miss Kinkead presided at our table (which was a buffalo skin spread on the ground) and certainly with as much ease and grace as if it had been in a drawing room, at a mahogany table with brass castors. My dear reader, if you ever travel across the plain, by the time you reach the Humboldt you will know how to appreciate a good dinner, and manners approaching to anything like elegance. Ah! pork and bread and long travel are sad levelers of refinement.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1773: Scotland

From James Boswell's *The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson*.

Edinburgh. We returned to my house. . . . We gave him as good a dinner as we could. Our Scotch muirfowl, or growse, were then abundant, and quite in season; and, so far as wisdom and wit can be aided by administering agreeable sensations to the palate, my wife took care that our

great guest should not be deficient.

August 15

PARLIAMENT CAKE

1822: Scotland

There is mention of “Parliament Cake” in connection with King George IV on this day. It appears in an anecdote in *The Modern Athens: A Dissection and Demonstration of Men and Things in the Scotch Capital, by a Modern Greek* (1825) by Robert Mudie. The king was on his way to Holyrood Palace, which is the official residence of the monarch of the United Kingdom in Scotland.

[T]here was presented to George the Fourth, a Parliament-cake,—not such a cake as is gleaned from the fields of a country, or baked in the oven of a royal burgh, and thence sent to St. Stephen’s Chapel as a well-leavened waive-offering, (and from which, by the way, Scotland has got by way of eminence the name of the Land of Cakes), but something more luscious and learned still,—a cake of sweet and spicy gingerbread, stamped with all the letters of the alphabet, and by combination and consequence, with the whole learning and literature of the united-kingdom. The presentation alluded to happened thus:

Margaret Sibbald, an able-bodied matron of Fisher-Row, had been induced, through the compound stimulus of curiosity and loyalty, to leave her home all unbreakfasted, in order to take her place in the royal procession; Margaret had stored her ample leathern pouch with a pennyworth of Parliament-cake, in order to support nature through this praise-worthy work; but Margaret’s eyes had been so much feasted, that Margaret’s stomach was forgotten.

Seeing that the King wore a hue which she did not consider as the hue of health, and judging that it might arise from depletion induced by his rocking upon the waters, she elbowed her way through horsemen, Highland-men, archer-men, and official men, up to the royal carriage, and drawing forth her only cake, held it up to his Majesty, expressing sorrow that his royal countenance was so pale, and assuring him that if she had had any thing better he would have got it. A forward stripling of the guards

any thing better he would have got it. A forward snipping of the guards charged Margaret sword in hand, to which Margaret replied, “Ye wearifu’ thing o’ a labster! Ye hae nae sense, I hae dune mair for the King than you can either do or help to do; I hae born him sax bonnie seamen as e’er hauled a rope, or handled a cutlass.”

It was, however, no time for prolonged hostilities, and so Margaret was lost in the crowd, and the guardsman not noticed in the procession.

Parliament Gingerbread

Boil for ten minutes, two ounces of whole ginger, which has been well crushed, in a gill and a half of water. Strain and let get cold, and if it has wasted add water to make up the original quantity. Mix a quarter of a pound of raw-sugar, sifted fine, with a pound of flour, a small teaspoonful of carraway seeds, and half a teaspoonful of carbonate of soda. Put into this two ounces of butter or lard and having well mixed a teaspoonful of molasses with the ginger water, make all into a paste. Roll out on a board to the thickness of rather less than half an inch, and cut into any shape desired. Put the cakes on a floured baking sheet, brush them, over with water in which a very small quantity of molasses has been mixed, and bake in a moderate oven for a quarter of an hour. When this cake is required of finer quality two ounces of candied orange peel, is used instead of ground carraway seed. Sometimes these cakes are cut into the shapes of kings and queens, and ornamented with, gold and silver leaf.

—*The Complete Bread, Cake and Cracker Baker* (Chicago, 1881), by J. Thompson Gill

FOOD FIRSTS

1502: Yucatan

Christopher Columbus, on his fourth voyage, first set eyes on cacao beans aboard a massive trading canoe which his vessel intercepted and captured off the coast of Yucatan. His son Ferdinand wrote of the event and commented on the “almonds,” which he noted to be highly prized, in the manner of currency, among the natives. He had no idea of their use or value as a beverage: “They

seemed to hold these almonds at a great price; for when they were brought on board ship together with their goods, I observed that when any of these almonds fell, they all stooped to pick it up, as if an eye had fallen.”

ANNIVERSARY

1912: California

This was the birthday of Julia Child. Child brought the concepts of French cuisine to the public by way of her debut—and still classic—cookbook, *Mastering the Art of French Cookery*, and her television programs.

You don't have to cook fancy or complicated masterpieces—just good food from fresh ingredients.

Noncooks think it's silly to invest two hours' work in two minutes' enjoyment; but if cooking is evanescent, so is the ballet.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia.

Our beasts were so heavily laden with the meat of two bullocks, that I found it rather difficult to carry the additional meat of the emu. We, however, divided every emu into four parts—the chest, the rump, and the two thighs—and suspended each of the latter to one of the four hooks of a packsaddle; the remaining parts were carried on our horses.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1773: Scotland, Man, the Cooking Animal

James Boswell and Samuel Johnson were a few days away from setting off on their tour of the Hebrides. They dined at Boswell's home, on Scottish veal, and in a footnote to his diary entry for the day, Boswell recounts a conversation with

Mr. Burke in which Johnson defines man as “a cooking animal.”

My definition of man is, “a Cooking Animal.” The beasts have memory, judgment and all the faculties and passions of our mind, in a certain degree; but no beast is a cook. The trick of the monkey using the cat’s paw to roast a chestnut is only a piece of shrewd malice in that *turpissima bestia*, which humbles us so sadly by its similarity to us. Man alone can dress a good dish; and every man whatever is more or less a cook, in seasoning what he himself eats. “Your definition is good,” said Mr Burke, “and I now see the full force of the common proverb. “There is REASON in roasting of eggs.”

1842: USA

From Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *American Journals*.

George Hillard and his wife arrived from Boston in the dusk of Saturday evening, to spend Sunday with us. . . . The night flitted over us all, and passed away, and up rose a gray and sullen morning . . . and we had a splendid breakfast of flapjacks, or slapjacks, and whortleberries, which I gathered on a neighboring hill, and perch, bream, and pout, which I hooked out of the river the evening before.

1868

The composer Modest Moussorgsky wrote to Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov on this day.

And another thing about German symphonic development. I tell you, our cold kvass soup is a horror to the Germans, and yet we eat it with pleasure. And their cold cherry soup is a horror to us, and yet it sends a German into ecstasy. In short, symphonic development is just like German philosophy and soup—all worked out and systematized. When a German thinks, he reasons his way to a conclusion. Our Russian brother, on the other hand, starts with a conclusion and then might amuse himself with some reasoning.

August 16

SAINT ROCH’S DAY

Saint Roch (Rocco, Roque) is a fourteenth-century French saint credited with healing plague victims who is popular in many European cities and countries. In Spain, “Saint Roch’s fingers” are a sort of trifle made with *Savoardi* (“ladyfinger”) biscuits and rich custard.

Sweet pastries are a common tradition on saints’ days in the Catholic countries of the world. In medieval times, the monasteries were the main site of wine production, and vast numbers of egg whites and shells were needed for the fining process. The remaining large numbers of egg yolks were commonly then given to the associated convents, where the nuns used them for baking fine pastries.

FOOD & WAR

1918: Japan, World War I

An Imperial ordinance was issued on this day which authorized the government to requisition all stocks of rice, which would then be put on the market. The order was a response to the series of “Rice Riots” which had been occurring across the country in response to the escalating price of this staple food.

A NOBLE FLITCH OF BACON

1830: England

A rowing match took place above Westminster Bridge on this day. The notice advising of the race said:

To be rowed on Monday, the 16th of August, in two heats, the first heat at three o’clock, and the second at six. To start from buoys moored off the Ship-wharf, round Carey’s Bath, up the Surrey shore, through Vauxhall-bridge, down round Mr. Barchard’s road, up to the wharf.

The boats carried “colours” of cabbage, beans, carrots, cucumbers, and onions, and the food theme extended to the prizes, which were given by Mr. Pay, the landlord of *The Ship*, at Lambeth:

- First boat A noble Flitch of Bacon.

- Second ditto Four Pigs' Heads.
- Third ditto Three ditto.
- Fourth ditto Two ditto.
- Fifth & Sixth ditto ... One each.

The flitch of bacon was “large enough to make a covering for a city alderman” (a comment on the commonly accepted belief of the prodigious appetite of city aldermen).

PENNSYLVANIA, 1663

1663: America

William Penn, “proprietor and governor of Pennsylvania, in America,” sent a letter on this day “to the committee of the free society of traders of that province, residing in London: containing a general description of the said province, its soil, air, water, seasons, and produce, both natural and artificial, and the good increase thereof.” Here is an extract:

The fruits that I find in the woods, are the white and black mulberry, chesnut, walnut, plumbs, strawberries, cranberries, hurtleberries and grapes of divers sorts. The great red grape (now ripe) called by ignorance, the fox-grape, because of the relish it hath with unskilful palates, is in itself an extraordinary grape, and by art, doubtless may be cultivated to an excellent wine, if not so sweet, yet little inferior to the Frontiniac, as it is not much unlike in taste, ruddiness set aside, which in such things, as well as mankind, differs the case much. There is a white kind of Muscatel, and a little black grape, like the cluster grape of England, not yet so ripe as the other; but they tell me, when ripe, sweeter, and that they only want skilful vinerons to make good use of them. I intend to venture on it with my Frenchman this season, who shows some knowledge in those things. Here are also peaches, and very good, and in great quantities, not an Indian plantation without them; but whether naturally here at first, I know not, however, one may have them by bushels for little; they make a pleasant drink, and I think not inferior to any peach you have in England, except the true Newington. It is disputable with me, whether it be best to fall to fining

the fruits of the country, especially the grape, by the care and skill of art, or send for foreign stems and sets, already good and approved. It seems most reasonable to believe, that not only a thing groweth best, where it naturally grows, but will hardly be equalled by another species of the same kind, that doth not naturally grow there. But to solve the doubt, I intend, if God give me life, to try both, and hope the consequence will be as good wine, as any European countries of the same latitude yield.

VI. The artificial produce of the country, is wheat, barley, oats, rye, peas, beans, squashes, pumpkins, watermelons, muskmelons, and all herbs and roots that our gardens in England usually bring forth.

VII. Of living creatures, fish, fowl and the beasts of the woods; here are divers sorts, some for food and profit, and some for profit only. For food as well as profit, the elk, as big as a small ox, deer, bigger than ours, beaver, raccoon, rabbits, squirrels, and some eat young bear, and commend it. Of fowl of the land, there is the turkey, forty and fifty pounds weight, which is very great; pheasants, heathbirds, pigeons and partridges in abundance. Of the water, the swan, goose, white and gray; brands, duck, teal, also the snipe and curlew, and in great numbers; but the duck and teal excel, nor so good have I ever eaten in other countries. Of fish, there is the sturgeon, herring, rock, shad, cat's-head, sheep's head, eel, smelt, perch, roach; and in inland rivers, trout, some say, salmon, above falls. Of shell-fish, we have oysters, crabs, cockles, conchs and muscles; some oysters six inches long; and one sort of cockles as big as the stewing-oysters, they make a rich broth. The creatures for profit only, by skin or fur, and that are natural to these parts, are the wild-cat, panther, otter, wolf, fox, fisher, mink, muskrat. And of the water, the whale for oil, of which we have good store, and two companies of whalers, whose boats are built, will soon begin their work, which hath the appearance of a considerable improvement. To say nothing of our reasonable hopes of good cod in the bay.

Peaches are not considered native to the Americas, and the period of European habitation in the area was very short, so their presence on this list is most intriguing.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia.

Charley shot two more emus, and I felt the loss of our bullock very much, as it became difficult to carry the additional meat, which, however, was too valuable to be wasted or thrown away. Although we had followed the creek for seven miles, we did not find it joined by any of those hollows we had crossed the day before; and it would appear that the intervening plains extended far to the north-ward, and that the hollows and creeks converged only very gradually towards each other.

1834: Chile

From Charles Darwin's journal of the voyage of the *Beagle*.

[A]nd in the morning we set out to ascend the Campana, or Bell Mountain, which is 6400 feet high. . . . The evening was fine, and the atmosphere so clear, that the masts of the vessels at anchor in the bay of Valparaiso, although no less than twenty-six geographical miles distant, could be distinguished clearly as little black streaks. . . . The setting of the sun was glorious; the valleys being black whilst the snowy peaks of the Andes yet retained a ruby tint. When it was dark, we made a fire beneath a little arbour of bamboos, fried our *charqui* (or dried slips of beef), took our *mate*, and were quite comfortable. There is an inexpressible charm in thus living in the open air.

Maté or *Yerba Maté* is the daily national drink of Paraguay, Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay. It is also called Paraguay Tea. It is a tisane made from the leaves *Ilex paraguariensis*, a small tree belonging to the holly family. It is also called Missionary Tea or Jesuit Tea, because the early Jesuit missionaries to South America encouraged its cultivation as they found "it restrained the desire of the Indians for spirituous drinks, while its cultivation, collection and preparation gave employment to converted Indians and brought wealth to the order."

1836: USA

From missionary Narcissa Whitman's journal of her journey in 1836 from New York, across the Rocky Mountains, to Oregon and beyond.

This eve found plenty of berries called hawthorn on the stream where we have encamped. They are large as a cherry and taste much like a mealy sweet apple. Our route on this side of Snake River is less hilly and difficult than on the south side, and said to be two days shorter.

1856: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau.

What a variety of old garden herbs—mints, etc.—are naturalized along an old settled road, like this to Boston which the British travelled! And then there is the site, apparently, of an old garden by the tan-yard, where the spearmint grows so rankly. I am intoxicated with the fragrance. Though I find only one new plant (the cassia), yet old acquaintances grow so rankly, and the spearmint intoxicates me so, that I am bewildered, as it were by a variety of new things. An infinite novelty. All the roadside is the site of an old garden where fragrant herbs have become naturalized,—hounds-tongue, bergamot, spearmint, elecampane, *etc.* I see even the tiger lily, with its bulbs, growing by the roadside far from houses (near Leighton's graveyard). I think I have found many new plants, and am surprised when I can reckon but one. A little distance from my ordinary walk and a little variety in the growth or luxuriance will produce this illusion. By the discovery of one new plant all bounds seem to be infinitely removed.

1856: England

Nathaniel Hawthorne, in England, wrote to his young son, at home in America, on this day.

OLD BOY,— We have very good dinners at Mrs. Blodgett's, and I think you would like very much to be there. There are so many people that Charley sits at a side-table, and he lives upon the fat of the land; and so would you, if you sat at the side-table with him. Yesterday he ate roast-beef and Yorkshire pudding: but if he had preferred it, he might have had some chicken-pie, with nice paste; or some roast duck, which looked very good; or some tripe fried in batter; or some boiled chicken,—or a great many other delectable things. And we had two kinds of fish,—boiled salmon and fried soles. I myself ate salmon; but the soles seemed to be very nice too. And we had so many green peas that they were not half eaten. and string-

beans besides,—oh, how nice! When the puddings, and tarts, and custards, and Banbury cakes, and cheese-cakes, and greengages, and that kind of stuff, was put on the table, I had hardly any appetite left; but I did manage to eat some currant pudding, and a Banbury cake, and a Victoria cake, and a slice of a beautiful Spanish muskmelon, and some plums. If you had been there, I think you would have had a very good dinner, and there would not have been nearly so many nice things left on the table. Tell mamma that, if she pleases, I have no objection to your taking riding-lessons along with Una. Mamma says you have been a very good boy. I am glad to hear it, and hope you will keep good till I come back.

August 17

A SOY BEAN LUNCH

1934: Chicago

Henry Ford, best known for his automobile business, was a passionate promoter of the soy bean. He believed that agriculture and industry should be more closely aligned, and that each should support and supply the other. Ford's initial interest in the soy bean was as a source for industrial products, and he famously produced car parts and fabric from the plant. His interest soon extended to the soy bean as human food, and over the decades of the 1930s and 1940s he held a number of promotional lunches and dinners in which it featured prominently. The first took place at the Ford Exhibit at the Century of Progress Exhibition, and the meal was based entirely around soy beans.

The menu was: Puree of soy beans, soy bean croquettes with tomato sauce, buttered green soy beans, pineapple ring with soy bean cheese (i.e., tofu) and soy bean dressing, soy bean bread with soy bean relish, soy bean biscuit with soy bean butter, apple pie with soy bean crust, cocoa with soy bean milk, soy bean coffee, assorted soy bean cookies, soy bean cakes, and assorted soy bean candy.

DINING ABOARD AN AIRSHIP

1936: Dining Aboard the Hindenburg

The luncheon menu aboard the airship on this day consisted of: Strong Broth

The luncheon menu aboard the airship on this day consisted of: Strong Broth Theodor, Fattened Duckling, Bavarian Style with Champagne Cabbage, Savory Potatoes and Madeira Gravy, Pears Convent Style, Mocha.

For dinner, the passengers sat down to Cream Soup Hamilton, Grilled Sole with Parsley Butter, Venison Cutlets Beauval with Berny Potatoes, Mushrooms and Cream Sauce, Mixed Cheese Plate.

A selection of fine German wines and a few French wines accompanied the meals.

SUPPER WITH LOUIS XV

1757: Château de Choisy , France

The supper menu offered to Louis XV on this day was made up of forty-four dishes.

PREMIER SERVICE

2 Oilles : une au coulis de lentilles, une à la paysanne.

2 potages : un aux laitues, une chiffonnade

8 Hors d'oeuvre : Une galantine d'oseille, d'haricots à la bretonne, d'harengs servis à la moutarde, de maquereaux à la maître d'hôtel, une omelette aux croûtons, de morue à la crème, d'harengs frais à la moutarde, de petits pâtés

DEUXIEME SERVICE

4 Grandes entrées : un brochet à la polonaise, une hure de saumon au four, une carpe au court bouillon, une truite à la Chambord

4 Moyennes : de soles aux fines herbes, de truites grillées sauce hachée, de perche à la hollandaise, de perches au blanc, de lotte à l'allemande, de raie au beurre noir, de saumon grille

TROISIEME SERVICE

8 plats de Rost : de soles. de filets de brochets frits. de limandes frites. de

lottes frites, de truites, de carrelets au blanc, une queue de saumon, de soles

4 salades

QUATRIEME SERVICE

8 entremets chauds : de choux fleurs au parmesan, de pain aux champignons, de rotties aux anchois, un ragoût mêlé, d'artichauts frits, d'haricots verts, de choux-raves, d'épinards

4 froids : un buisson d'écrevisses, un gâteau à la Bavière, un poupelin, une brioche

NELSON & THE SOUP TEST

1802: Chepstow, Wales

Lord Nelson and his mistress, Lady Emma Hamilton, were staying at the Three Cranes Inn in Chepstow, en route to the Hamilton estates at Milford Haven on this day. A story is told that the landlord came to Nelson, informing him that one of his men was outside and wished to speak with him. Nelson asked the landlord to give the man a bowl of soup but no spoon. The landlord returned, and reported that the man had emptied out his tobacco tin and used it as a spoon to take his soup. This action confirmed to Nelson that the man was one of his own crew, and agreed to see him. It was presumably the typically resourceful act of improvisation on the part of an experienced seaman that gave Nelson confidence that the man was indeed one of his own.

ANNIVERSARY

1737: Montdidier, France

This was the birthday of Antoine-Augustin Parmentier, the pharmacist after whom many potato dishes are named. Parmentier joined the French army in 1757, and during the course of his military career spent some time as a prisoner of war of the Prussians. At that time, the potato was little used in France, and then only for pig food. In Prussia however, it was a staple food for peasants and prisoners. Parmentier returned to France thoroughly converted to the value of the potato as food, and he subsequently did more to promote its use than almost any

potato as food, and he subsequently did more to promote its use than almost any other single individual in its history. He held dinners in which the potato featured in a myriad ways, but he was particularly interested in its use in bread. In 1778, he succeeded in making acceptable bread exclusively from potatoes (see October 8 for the recipe). The poor grain harvests of the 1780s and the consequent high cost of wheat and bread stimulated much wider interest in the potato as a useful staple, and it never looked back.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769: Polynesia

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks. He mentions the taste of the weevils in the ship's bread.

Ulhiatea; Otahah. This morn hoisted out a boat and sent ashore on the Island of Otahah in which Dr Solander and myself took a passage. We went through a large breach in the reef situate between two Islands calld Toahattu and Whennuaia within which we found very spacious harbours, particularly in one bay which was at least 3 miles deep. The inhabitants as usual so that long before night we had purchasd 3 hoggs, 21 fowls and as many yams and plantains as the boat would hold. Indeed of these last we might have had any quantity and a more useful refreshment they are to us in my opinion even than the pork; they have been for this week past boild and servd instead of bread; every man in the ship is fond of them and with us in the Cabbin they agree much better than the Bread fruit did which sometimes gripd us. But what makes any refreshments of this kind the more acceptable is that our bread is at present so full of vermin that notwithstanding all possible care I have sometimes had 20 at a time in my mouth, every one of which tasted as hot as mustard.

1770: Australia

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks.

At Anchor within the Reef; Temple Bay. The shoal we went upon was the very reef we had so near been lost upon yesterday, now no longer terrible to us; it afforded little provision for the ship, no turtle, only 300lb of Great cockles, some were however of an immense size.

1811: USA

From the journal of Wilson Price Hunt's overland expedition in 1811–1812.

[W]e could find no passage through these mountains. We killed a big horn whose meat is good, not unlike mutton. Usually we found these animals on mountains where no other animals could go. Several ran and leaped on the very edges of precipices. We also saw some black-tailed deer, larger than the red deer and with very big ears. Their flesh is not so tasty as that of the red deer. The tips of their tails are black, and they are to be found only in mountainous country

1858: Australia

John McDouall Stuart, on his first expedition into the inland of the continent, observed the local aboriginals' method of catching kangaroo mice.

Miller's Water. . . . For upwards of a month we have been existing upon two pounds and a half of flour cake daily, without animal food. Since we commenced the journey, all the animal food we have been able to obtain has been four wallabies, one opossum, one small duck, one pigeon, and latterly a few kangaroo mice, which were very welcome; we were anxious to find more, but we soon got out of their country.

These kangaroo mice are elegant little animals, about four inches in length, and resemble the kangaroo in shape, with a long tail terminating with a sort of brush. Their habitations are of a conical form, built with twigs and rotten wood, about six feet in diameter at the base, and rising to a height of three or four feet. When the natives discover one of these nests they surround it, treading firmly round the base in order to secure any outlet; they then remove the top of the cone, and, as the mice endeavour to escape, they kill them with the waddies which they use with such unfailing skill. When the nest is found by only a few natives, they set fire to the top of the cone, and thus secure the little animals with ease.

For the last month we have been reduced to one meal a-day, and that a very small one, which has exhausted us both very much and made us almost incapable of exertion. We have now only TWO meals left to take us to Streaky Bay, which is distant from this place ONE HUNDRED MILES.

We have been forced to boil the tops of the pigface, to satisfy the wants of nature. Being short of water, we boiled them in their own juice. To a hungry man they were very palatable, and, had they been boiled in fresh water, would have made a good vegetable. Yesterday we obtained a few sow-thistles, which we boiled, and found to be very good.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1666: London, England

From Samuel Pepys's diary.

Being come thither I did some business there and at the Rope Yarde, and had a piece of bride-cake sent me by Mrs. Barbary into the boate after me, she being here at her uncle's, with her husband, Mr. Wood's son, the mast-maker, and mighty nobly married, they say, she was very fine, and he very rich, a strange fortune for so odd a looked mayde, though her hands and body be good, and nature very good, I think.

1763: Oxford, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde. He is still at Oxford, before his appointment to his first curacy at Thurloxton.

Dined in the Hall at the High Table upon a neck of Venison and a Breast made into a Pasty, a Ham and Fowls and two Pies. It is a Venison Feast which we have once a year about this time. . . . 2 Bucks one year, and 1 Buck another year is always sent from Whaddon Chase and divided betewen the Wardens, Senr Fellows, and us.

1863: France

The poet Robert Browning wrote to his friend Frederic Leighton from St. Marie, near Pornic, where he was on holiday with his son. It was his habit, when abroad, to be virtually vegetarian. "I live upon milk and fruit, bathe daily, do a good morning's work, read a little with Pen and somewhat more by myself, go to bed early, and get up earlyish—rather liking it all."

August 18

MUSEUM REFRESHMENTS

1900: London, England

The British Museum Refreshment Department offered the following Bill of Fare on this day:

Bill of Fare

SOUPS

Parmentier au Cerfeuil	6d
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Paysanne	6d
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FISH

Boiled Whiting and Parsley Sauce	6d
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ENTREES

Haricot Mutton	8d
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Sausages and Mashed Potatoes	8d
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COLD MEATS

Half Chicken and Ham	2s 6d
Wing, 1/6, Leg	1s 3d
Veal and Ham Pie	8d
Roast Lamb	8d
Steak Pie	6d
Mutton	6d
Roast, Pressed, or Silverside of Beef	5d
German Sausage, Ham or Tongue	5d
SWEETS	
Stewed Pineapple and Rice	4d
Stewed Prunes and Rice	4d
Plum Tart	3d
Vermicelli Pudding	3d
Madeira Cake	2d

SUNDRIES

Salad	3d Peas	3d
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Potatoes	2d Saute Potatoes	2d
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Tomato	3d Cabbage	2d
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Watercress	1d	
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Pot of Tea (for two)	6d Tea, Coffee, Cocoa (cup)	3d
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Hard Boiled Egg	2d Butter or Bread	1d
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Cream Cheese	2d Pickles	1d
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Cheddar	1d Sauces in Variety (each)	1d
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MINERAL WATERS

Johannis (large)	6d Johannis (small)	3d
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Apollinaris	6d Ginger Beer	3d
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Lemonade 3d Ginger Ale 3d

Soda Water 3d Small Soda Water 2d

DESSERT

Bananas(each) 2d

Neapolitan Ice 4d

ANNIVERSARY

1850

Honoré de Balzac, the French novelist and playwright, died on this day. It is said that his death was related to caffeine poisoning, due to the extraordinary amounts of coffee he drank. He is said to have imbibed up to fifty cups a day, claiming that it fuelled his creativity. In a short piece titled *The Pleasures and Pains of Coffee* he wrote, “Coffee is a great power in my life.”

FOOD CERTIFICATION

1999

Monsanto’s genetically modified milk was ruled unsafe by the Codex Alimentarius Commission (the United Nations’ Food Safety Agency), which represents 101 countries. The vote, which was unanimous, was in favor of the moratorium called in Europe in 1993 on Monsanto’s genetically engineered hormonal milk, which in turn developed out of widespread concern of its safety on the part of consumer and scientific groups.

Bovine Somatotrophin is a naturally occurring hormone in cattle, which is involved in growth and development of the animal. Monsanto developed a

synthetic version of the hormone, using recombinant DNA technology. This recombinant hormone, referred to as rBST or rBGH, increases milk production when it is injected every week into dairy cows.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia.

Last night we were busily employed in cutting up and drying our two emus, in which operation we were favoured by a slight breeze from the south-east. As we had no fat nor emu oil to fry the meat with, I allowed a sufficient quantity of meat to be left on the bones, which made it worth while to grill them; and we enjoyed a most beautiful moonlight night over a well grilled emu bone with so much satisfaction, that a frequenter of the Restaurants of the Palais Royal would have been doubtful whether to pity or envy us.

1834: Chile

From Charles Darwin's journal of the voyage of the *Beagle*.

San Felipe . . . I stayed here five days. My host the superintendent of the mine, was a shrewd but rather ignorant Cornish miner. . . . The labouring men work very hard. They have little time allowed for their meals, and during summer and winter they begin when it is light, and leave off at dark. They are paid one pound sterling a month, and their food is given them: this for breakfast consists of sixteen figs and two small loaves of bread; for dinner, boiled beans; for supper, broken roasted wheat grain. They scarcely ever taste meat; as, with the twelve pounds per annum, they have to clothe themselves, and support their families. The miners who work in the mine itself have twenty-five shillings per month, and are allowed a little charqui. But these men come down from their bleak habitations only once in every fortnight or three weeks.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1773: Scotland

James Boswell's *The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson*.

[In Leith] I bought some speldings, fish (generally whittings) salted and dried in a particular manner, being dipped in the sea and dried in the sun, and eaten by the Scots by way of a relish. He had never seen them, though they are sold in London. I insisted on scottifying [Footnote: My friend, General Campbell, Governour of Madras, tells me, that they make speldings in the East Indies, particularly at Bombay, where they call them Bambaloes.] his palate; but he was very reluctant. With difficulty I prevailed with him to let a bit of one of them lie in his mouth. He did not like it.

August 19

VINALIA RUSTICA

In Ancient Rome this was the beginning of the second wine festival of the year (see April 23). The day was sacred to Jupiter and Venus, and the rites were intended to protect the imminent harvest from harm. The *flamen dialis* (priest) picked and blessed the first bunch of grapes, and a female lamb was sacrificed. Only after this was done could wine, *must*, be carried into the city. It was a holiday for many, and a day of general feasting and wine-drinking.

Must refers to the expressed juice of the grape, and also to the pulp and skins of the crushed grapes.

A CORONATION FEAST

1274: England

Edward I was finally crowned on this day, after several postponements, almost twenty months after he acceded to the throne after the death of his father, Henry III. The coronation ceremony was followed by a feast, as was usual. Six months before the planned coronation warrants had been issued to the sheriffs of various counties, requiring them to supply various for the feast.

The county of Gloucestershire was ordered to provide sixty oxen and cows, sixty swine, two fat boars, forty bacon pigs, and three thousand capons and hens.

Although the details of the bill of fare for the feast are not known, the provisions included 440 oxen and cows; 430 sheep; 450 pigs; 16 fat boars; 278 flitches of bacon; and 19,600 capons and other fowl. In addition there was a vast quantity of bread, spices, wine, and other items.

The general public was involved in the festivities too. In Cheapside (London) a fountain was set up which “ran with white wine and red for all to drink of.”

MAPLE SYRUP

1791: America

The patriot and physician Benjamin Rush saw the maple tree in a new, nationalistic light after the revolution. He set down his ideas in the form of a letter to his friend Thomas Jefferson, and read it before the American Philosophical Society, on August 19, 1791.

An account of the sugar maple-tree, of the United States, and of the methods of obtaining sugar from it, together with observations upon the advantages both public and private of this sugar.

In obedience to your request, I have set down to communicate to our Society through the medium of a letter to you, a short account of the Sugar Maple-tree of the United States, together with such facts and remarks as I have been able to collect, upon the methods of obtaining Sugar from it, and upon the advantages both public and private, of this Sugar. . . .

. . . The tree is supposed to arrive at its full growth in the woods in twenty years. It is not injured by tapping; on the contrary, the oftener it is tapped, the more syrup is obtained from it. In this respect it follows the law of animal secretion. A single tree has not only survived, but flourished after forty-two tappings in the same number of years. . . .A tree of an ordinary size yields in a good season from twenty to thirty gallons of sap, from which are made from five to six pounds of sugar. . . .

. . . Whoever considers that the gift of the sugar maple trees is from a benevolent Providence that we have many millions of acres in our country

beneficial Providence, that we have many millions of acres in our country covered with them, that the tree is improved by repeated tappings, and that the sugar is obtained by the frugal labor of a farmer's family, and at the same time considers the labor of cultivating the sugar cane, the capitals sunk in sugar works, the first cost of slaves and cattle, the expenses of provisions for both of them, and in some instances the additional expense of conveying the sugar to a market, in all the West-India Islands, will not hesitate in believing that the maple sugar may be manufactured much cheaper, and sold at a less price than that which is made in the West-Indies.



The maple sugar harvest

(Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division [Reproduction number e.g., LC-D420-2992])

He summarized his letter with the words:

I cannot help contemplating a sugar maple tree with a species of affection and even veneration, for I have persuaded myself, to behold in it the happy means of rendering the commerce and slavery of our African brethren, in the sugar islands as unnecessary, as it has always been inhuman and unjust.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1856: USA

Gail Borden Jr. of Brooklyn, New York, was granted Patent No. 15,553 for his “Improvement in Concentration of Milk.” In his patent specifications, Borden noted:

Like blood, milk is a living fluid, and as soon as drawn from the cow begins to die, change, and decompose. In no other process for concentrating milk with which I am acquainted has any adequate means been adopted to prevent incipient decomposition of the milk and render it preservative and soluble.

He summarized his method as:

First: The nature of my discovery and invention consists in concentrating milk in a vacuum-vessel out of contact with the atmosphere, to prevent incipient decomposition, or any hurtful change in the constituent elements of the milk during the process of evaporation.

Second: It also consists in keeping the new sweet milk to be concentrated, in vacua, in a vessel from which the air is exhausted, to keep the milk out of contact with the atmosphere.

Borden acknowledged that he was not the first to develop a method for preserving milk:

I am also aware that Wm. Newton and many others since have obtained patents for concentrating milk by various modes of evaporation, and combining it with sugar to render it soluble and preservative. I do not claim this as my discovery or invention; but what I claim, and desire to secure by Letters Patent, is—

Producing concentrated sweet milk by evaporation *in vacuo*, substantially as set forth, the same having no sugar or other foreign matter mixed with it.

“THE PICNIC THAT CHANGED THE WORLD”

1989: Sopron

One of the most significant events of the Cold War took place on this day. A

One of the most significant events of the Cold War took place on this day. A picnic was organized by the Pan-European Movement and the Hungarian Democratic Forum on this day, to demand further progress in the dismantling of the Iron Curtain. The process had begun a few weeks earlier, on June 27, when the Austrian foreign minister Alois Mock and the last Communist foreign minister of Hungary, Gyula Horn, symbolically cut down the iron curtain by jointly cutting through the border fence.

Over ten thousand were present at the picnic, which took place in the Sopronkőhida forest on the Austro-Hungarian border. There was to be a symbolic crossing of the border between the Hungarian city of Sopron and the Austrian village of St. Magarethen by an official party. The symbolic opening quickly became an actual one, however, and in the three hours that the border gate remained open, six hundred citizens of the German Democratic Republic crossed into Austria. Hungarian border guards had been ordered not to carry arms on the day, and were even seen to be assisting refugees to cross the border.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1818: Australia

From John Oxley's journal of his expedition in 1817 to explore the course of the Lachlan River.

Our dogs, which had so long contributed to our support, had been for the last four days dependant upon us for theirs, and we were too much indebted to their exertions not to share our meals with them with cheerfulness. These woods abound with kangaroo rats, and it is singular that, pinched as the dogs were, they would not touch them even when cooked.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1664: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys: “[A]nd home to supper to a good dish of fritters, which I bespoke and were done much to my mind; then to the office a while again, and so home to bed.”

1668: London, England

John Evelyn, the famous diarist, wrote of his first taste of pineapple, from King Charles II's own plate at dinner in the Banqueting House.

I saw the magnificent entry of the French Ambassador Colbert, received in the banqueting house. I had never seen a richer coach than that which he came in to Whitehall. Standing by his Majesty at dinner in the presence, there was of that rare fruit called the King—pine, growing in Barbados and the West Indies; the first of them that I had ever seen. His Majesty having cut it up, was pleased to give me a piece off his own plate to taste of; but in my opinion it falls short of those ravishing varieties of deliciousness described in Captin Ligon's history, and others, but possibly it might be, or certainly was, much impaired in coming so far; it has yet a grateful acidity, but tastes more like a quince and melon than of any other fruit he mentions.

1856: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau:

Low blueberries, though some are a very little wilted, are very sweet and good as well as abundant. Huckleberries getting to be suspected. What countless varieties of low blackberries! Here, in this open pine grove, I pluck some large fresh and very sweet ones when they are mostly gone without. So they are continued a little longer to us.

1912: Austria

The writer D. H. Lawrence and his wife, Frieda, were staying in Austria. He wrote to their friend Mrs. S. A. Hopkin: "Here we are lodging awhile in a farmhouse. A mountain stream rushes by outside. It is icy and clear. We go out all day with our rucksacks—make fires, boil eggs, and eat the lovely fresh gruyere cheese that they make here. We are almost pure vegetarians."

August 20

FOOD & WAR

1651: Scotland and the Protectorate

The *Mercurious Scoticus* (a paper given over to “Impartially communicating the daily

proceedings of the armies in England, Ireland”) published the following information on this day in relation to the interception and seizure by the English of Dutch vessels en route to assist the Scots.

A Man of War belonging to Col. Adkins of Leith called the Convert Friggat, Commanded by that Souldier, Capt. Peter Escot, with nine Guns and 46 men, brought into that Harbour two Prizes, which the Captain about 15 dayes past had seized on (after some hot dispute) before Stextco in Cathnes, the one was a Dutch Pinke of 120 Tun, wherein was good store of Herrings and other fish, Tallow, Hides and Bief, the other Ship of 160 Tun laden with Haver Meale and Barley, in which were many intercepted Letters of consequence to Lord Jermin, Capt. Titus, and many others in Holland from Arguisle, Cleveland, and many more of that Faction.

Haver is the old name for oats. The word derives from Old Saxon and has been in use since at least the fourteenth century. It was in common usage in many parts of England (particularly in the North, where oats were the staple grain) as well as Scotland: hence *haver-meal* was oatmeal, *haver-bread* and *haver-cake* indicate oatcakes, and a *haver-sack* is a bag in which oatmeal is carried.

Barley was another essential staple in Scotland at this time, so the loss of the ships would have been a big blow to the Scots.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

1349: London, Fishermen Punished for Using “False Nets” and Taking Too-Small Fish

The dates in this legal report are given in relation to the nearest religious observance, as was usual in this time, when the vast majority of the population was illiterate. August 20 was a Thursday in 1349, so the next Saturday was August 22.

On Saturday next after the Feast of the Decollation of St. John the Baptist

[August 20] . . . Robert de Rameseye, John de Burdeux, William de Braynford, Richard Kayho, John Horn, and William Fourneux, fishmongers, brought to the Guildhall of London five false nets, that had been found upon John de Goldstone of Berkyng, John de Clayhurst of Grenewyche, and Walter Sprot of the same place, in the water of Thames, on the East side of London Bridge, with three bushels of small fish in the same; which fish, by reason of their smallness, could be of no use to any one. And the said John de Goldstone, John de Clayhurst, and Walter Sprot, being questioned as to the matters aforesaid, acknowledged that they had taken the said fish with such false nets in the water of Thames. And because that John Lovekyn, the Mayor, and the Aldermen, wished more fully to consider as to the judgment to be delivered thereon, a day was given to the aforesaid John, John, and Walter, the Monday following, namely; and they were to be committed to prison in the meantime.

In the first week of September, judgment was determined.

[T]he Mayor and Aldermen having held conference upon the enormous offence before-mentioned, it was ordered that the said five false nets should be burnt. And the said John, John, and Walter, were sworn that for the future they would not use false nets; and they found sureties for the same, namely;— William Dykeman, *ismonger* [ironmonger], John atte Naysse of Grenewyche, *mariner*, Nicholas Clerk of Berkyng, Henry Basset, of the same place, John de Lyndeseye of London, and William de Maydestane, sailor.

ADVICE TO PICNIC PARTIES

1870: USA

This day's edition of the American magazine *Punchinello* offered some picnic advice to readers.

At this culminating period of the summer season, it is natural that the civic mind should turn itself to the Contemplation of sweet rural things, including shady groves, lunch baskets, wild flowers, sandwiches, bird songs, and bottled lager-bier. The skies are at their bluest, now; the woods and fields are at their greenest; flowers are blooming their yellowest, and purplest, and scarletest. All Nature is smiling, in fact, with one large, comprehensive

smile, exactly like a first-class PRANG chromo with a fresh coat of varnish upon it.

Things being thus, what can be more charming than a rural excursion to some tangled thicket, the very brambles, and poison-ivy, and possible copperhead snakes of which are points of unspeakable value to a picnic party, because they are sensational, and one cannot have them in the city without rushing into fabulous extra expense. It is good, then, that neighbors should club together for the festive purposes of the picnic, and a few words of advice regarding the arrangement of such parties may be seasonable.

If your excursion includes a steamboat trip, always select a boat that is likely to be crowded to its utmost capacity, more especially one of which a majority of the passengers are babies in arms. There will probably be some roughs on board, who will be certain to get up a row, in which case you can make the babies in arms very effective as buffers for warding off blows, while the crowd will save you from being knocked down.

Should there be a bar on board the steamer, it will be the duty of the gentlemen of the party to keep serving the ladies with cool beverages from it at brief intervals during the trip. This will promote cheerfulness, and, at the same time, save for picnic duty proper the contents of the stone jars that are slumbering sweetly amongst the pork-pies and apple-dumplings by which the lunch-baskets are occupied.

Never take more than one knife and fork with you to a picnic, no matter how large the party may be. The probability is that you may be attacked by a gang of rowdies and it is no part of your business to furnish them with weapons.

Avoid taking up your ground near a swamp or stagnant water of any kind. This is not so much on account of mosquitoes as because of the small saurian reptiles that abound in such places. If your party is a large one, there will certainly be one lady in it, at least, who has had a lizard in her stomach for several years, and the struggles of the confined reptile to join its congeners in the swamp might induce convulsions, and to mar the hilarity of the party.

To provide against an attack by the city brigands who are always prowling in the vicinity of picnic parties, it will be judicious to attend to the

following rules:

Select all the fat women of the party, and seat them in a ring outside the rest of the picnickers, and with their faces toward the centre of the circle. In the event of a discharge of missiles this will be found a very effective cordon—quite as effective, in fact, as the feather beds used in the making up of barricades.

Let the babies of the party be so distributed that each, or as many as possible of the gentlemen present, can have one at hand to snatch up and use for a fender should an

attack at close quarters be made.

If any dark, designful strangers should intrude themselves upon the party, unbidden, those gentlemen present should by no means exhibit the slightest disposition to resent the intrusion or to show fight, as the strangers are sure to be professional thieves, and, as such, ready to commit murder, if necessary. Treat the strangers with every consideration possible under the circumstances. Should there be no champagne, apologize for the absence of it, and offer the next best vintage that you happen to have. Of course, having lunched, the strangers will be eager to acquire possession of all valuables belonging to the party. The gentlemen, therefore, will make a point of promptly handing over to them their own watches and jewelry, as well as those of their lady friends. Having arrived home (we assume the possibility of this), refrain, carefully, from communicating with the police on the subject of the events of the day. The publicity that would follow would render you an object of derision, and no possible good could come to you from disclosure of the facts. But you should at once make up your mind never to participate in another picnic.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1888: Greenland

Fridtjof Nansen (1861–1930) was a Norwegian scientist and explorer. In 1888 he led the first crossing of the interior of Greenland. From August 17 to the morning of August 20, 1888, the men were confined to their tent by a violent storm. Nansen wrote on this day:

Rations were reduced to a minimum, the idea being that as there was no work to do, there was no need for much food, though we had to take just enough to keep ourselves alive, the whole consumption amounting to one full meal a day. . . . At last, on the morning of August 20, the weather so far improved that we could resume our journey, and in preparation we fortified ourselves with a supply of hot lentil soup, to make up for the famine rations of the three preceding days.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1773: Scotland

From James Boswell's *The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson*.

About eleven at night we arrived at Montrose. We found but a sorry inn, where I myself saw another waiter put a lump of sugar with his fingers into Dr Johnson's lemonade, for which he called him "Rascal!" It put me in great glee that our landlord was an Englishman. [Boswell is a Scot.]

1820

From the journal of Mr. William Hamilton, surgeon & superintendent for the ship *Maria*, on its voyage to transport convicts from England to Van Dieman's Land (Tasmania).

Weather fine with a fresh breeze. Bedding up. Prison decks cleaned. Mustered and inspected the Convicts, all appearing clean. Read Prayers and inquired into the state of the Schools, *etc.* Dyspeptic symptoms amongst the Convicts have been prevalent, requiring the frequent use of cathartic, *etc.*, *etc.* The effects of their confined situation and their diet, so different from what many have been accustomed to before embarking. This I found to be the case on a former voyage to New South Wales when I had women under my care, and I am of [the] opinion that if the Convicts were supplied with more bread and more of the farinaceous part of the diet (especially in the Summer Passages and within the Tropics) with which they are at present supplied, and less beef, it would contribute much to their health. The pork they like, as with it the pease sauce as a vegetable.

1844: Australia

The young Annabella Boswell was bridesmaid at the double wedding of friends in Port Macquarie in New South Wales on this day. She described the wedding breakfast in her journal.

There were little bouquets of flowers tied with white ribbon on each plate. The cake was raised in the centre of the table, supported by an array of smaller ones. The table was literally covered. I do not think it would have held another glass, for in every crevice were placed custards, jellies, and creams. At one end was the largest turkey I ever saw, well supported by hams, tongues, chickens, ducks, pies, tarts, puddings, blanc mange and various fruits.

1853: Italy

The poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning was in Italy, and wrote to a friend:

Casa Tolomei, Alta Villa, Bagni di Lucca: . . . We are enjoying the mountains here—riding the donkeys in the footsteps of the sheep, and eating strawberries and milk by basinsful. . . .The strawberries succeed one another throughout the summer, through growing on different aspects of the hills. If a tree is felled in the forests, strawberries spring up, just as mushrooms might, and the peasants sell them for just nothing.

August 21

THE QUEEN'S CAUDLE

1762: England, a Caudle for a Royal Birth

William Bray was clerk of the Board of Green Cloth (the department which audited the accounts of the royal household, and made arrangements for royal travel), at St. James's Palace. In his diary on this day he wrote, "To St. James's with Mrs. Norwood, and three Miss Adees to drink caudle."

It was a tradition of long-standing that for a week or more after a royal birth, *caudle* was provided to the clerks of the Green Cloth and other officials and

important visitors at St. James's. On this occasion, the caudle was provided on account of the birth of a royal prince, the future George IV, on August 12.

At five days old, the infant prince was exhibited to public view (selected members of the public, that is) for six days. The cream of society, in groups of forty at a time, came to admire him, and enjoy the refreshments. It is said that for this birth, eight gallons of caudle and five hundred pounds of cake were consumed every day—the cake alone costing £40 a day. The refreshments were still being offered on August 29, when the *London Chronicle* noted that “the resort of different ranks of people at St. James's to receive the Queen's Caudle is now very great.”

Caudle: this word has two meanings. In the context above, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, it refers to “a warm drink consisting of thin gruel, mixed with wine or ale, sweetened and spiced, given chiefly to sick people, esp. women in childbed; also to their visitors.” The word also sometimes referred to a sort of pre-prepared sauce or “liquor” (also called a *lear*) that was poured in via the “lumb” or hole in the top of pie, after it was cooked.

A Fine Caudle

Take a pint of milk, turn it with sack [sherry]; then strain it, and when it is cold, put it in a skillet with mace, nutmeg, and some white bread sliced; let all these boil, and then beat the yolks of four or five eggs, the whites of two, and thicken your caudle, stirring it all one way for fear it curdle; let it warm together, then take it off and sweeten it to your taste.

—*The Compleat Housewife* (London, 1739), by E. S. Smith

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1848: Britain

John Bethell was granted a patent for a method of preserving corn (that is, wheat or other grain, not maize) by the use of heated steam. This was achieved by “simply passing steam, generated in the usual way, through a series of heated or red-hot pipes; or the grain may be made to pass through a revolving cylinder of perforated metal or wire-gauze, placed in a close oven or chamber, heated in any way.”

This process would have prevented the grain from germinating, and hence improved its keeping ability. In the same patent, Mr. Bethell also proposed a method of preserving milk by “first scalding it, and then impregnating it with carbonic-acid gas in a soda-water machine, and bottling it in the usual way. The milk, well scalded, may be put into strong tin vessels, into which the carbonic-acid gas may be forced.”

FOOD SAFETY

1997: USA

The Hudson Foods Company of Arkansas closed their beef-processing plant in Nebraska, and agreed to destroy 25 million pounds of hamburger meat potentially contaminated with a deadly strain of the *E. coli* bacterium. It was the largest recall of meat in U.S. history at that time. The scandal had begun on August 12, when twenty thousand pounds of frozen beef patties were recalled following reports of illness in consumers of the product.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769: Polynesia

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks.

Standing to the Southward. This day our Plantains faild us, they were all eat, not one ever was rotten. Indeed since we left *Ulhietea* the Hogs have almost intirely subsisted upon them, of which we have no small number who I fear will feel the loss of them most sensibly as not one I believe has yet eat the smallest proportion of English food.



Plantain tree

THE GROG RATION

1740: British Navy

In 1731, the very long-standing British Naval ration of a gallon of beer a day per man was changed to that of half a pint of rum. Initially this rule applied only to ships in the West Indies, if beer was not available. When Admiral Edward Vernon (1684–1757) of the British Navy and hero of the “War of Jenkins Ear” was with the fleet in Jamaica, he became disgusted by what he called the “Dagon Drunkenness” (from Dagon, a half-man, half-fish Philistine god). He ordered the captains under his command

to make me a return in writing severally under your own hand and his how you think so growing an evil may be most effectually remedy'd. And you will take into your consideration whether their spirituous liquor being mixed in some due proportion of water daily when it is issued to them, or any part of it being abated for a proportion of sugar being mixed with it for making it more palatable, may not be in some sort of a remedy to it, and will give your opinions with that care and consideration as the spiritual and temporal welfare of your fellow subjects as well as his Majesty's Service may require of you. Given etc . . .

Seventeen days later, on August 21, his second order (No. 349) was issued:

You are therefore hereby required and directed, as you tender both the spiritual and temporal welfare of his Majesty's subjects, and preserving sobriety and good discipline in his Majesty's service, to take particular care that rum be no more served in specie to any of the ship's company under your command, but that the respective daily allowance of half a pint a man for all your officers and ship's company, be every day mixed with the proportion of a quart of water to every half pint of rum, to be mixed in a scuttled butt kept for that purpose, and to be done upon deck, and in the presence of the Lieutenant of the Watch, who is to take particular care to see that the men are not defrauded in having their full allowance of rum, and when so mixed it is to be served to them in two servings in the day, the one between the hours of 10 and 12 in the morning, and the other between 4 and 6 in the afternoon.

It was not until 1756 that the diluted rum ration was formalized. In 1844 it was reduced to quarter of a pint, once per day, in two portions, one between 10:00 a.m. and 12:00 noon and the other between 4:00 and 6:00 p.m. To make it more palatable it was suggested sugar and lime could be added (the latter as a scorbatic).

Vernon was nicknamed "Old Grog" on account of the grosgrain coat he habitually wore, and this name then became applied to the alcohol ration.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1665: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys: “I to the office, where, after I had done a little business, I to his house to dinner, whither comes Captain Cocke, for whose epicurisme a dish of partridges was sent for, and still gives me reason to think is the greatest epicure in the world.”

Pepys mentioned the great “epicurisme” of Captaine Cocke in a previous diary entry, but unfortunately did not give any further information about the man or his reputation.

1666: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys.

Mr. Batelier . . . told me of his own knowledge, being with some others at Bourdeaux, making a bargain with another man at a tavernne for some Clarets, they did hire a fellow to thunder (which he had the art of doing on a deale board) and to rain and hail; that is, make the noise of—so as to give them a pretence of undervaluing their Merchants wines, by saying this thunder would spoil and turn them—which was so reasonable to the Merchant that he did abate two pistolls per Ton for the wine, in belief of that—whereas, going out, there was no such thing. This Batelier did see and was the cause of, to his profit.

1888: Arles, France

Vincent van Gogh wrote to his brother Theo and mentions his sunflower painting: “I am hard at it, painting with the enthusiasm of a Marseillais eating bouillabaisse, which won’t surprise you when you know that what I’m at is the painting of some big sunflowers.”

August 22

RAISING THE ROOF

1793: Philadelphia

Benjamin Rush, a signatory to the Declaration of Independence and “the Father of American Psychiatry,” wrote a letter to his wife, Julia, in which he described

a very unusual dinner for the time. Philadelphia's black leaders held an elaborate dinner in celebration of "the raising of the roof of the African Church," for which Rush had helped to raise construction funds. He says: "I dined a mile from the town, under the shade of several large trees, with about an hundred carpenters and others who met to celebrate the raising of the roof of the African Church."

The guests were served by "the black people" present. At the end of the meal, Rush proposed two toasts: "Peace on earth and good-will to man," and "May African churches everywhere soon succeed to African bondage." He and the other guests then vacated their seats, which were taken by about fifty of "the black people," who were served in their turn by "six of the most respectable of the white company."

Rush also sent a large wheelbarrow full of melons to the prisoners at the nearby city jail, who had "overheard or witnessed the raising of the roof of the church," in order that they "might sympathize a little in the joy of the day."

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1788: Australia

Seven months into the settlement of the new colony, Surgeon White and several others are on a short exploratory expedition.

[O]ne of our company shot a very fine duck, which we had dressed for supper, on a little eminence by the side of a cabbage tree swamp, about half a mile from the run of the tide. Here the whole party got as much cabbage, to eat with their salt provisions, as they chose.

The "cabbage" was the cabbage palm, not the common vegetable of the *Brassica* family.



Cabbage palm

1817: Australia

From John Oxley's journal of his expedition in 1817 to explore the course of the Lachlan River.

Among the other agreeable consequences that have resulted from discovering the [Macquarie] river in this second Vale of Tempe, may be enumerated, as not the least, the abundance of fish and emus with which, we have been supplied; swans, and ducks, were also within our reach, but we had no shot. Very large muscles [mussels] were found growing among the reeds along some of the reaches; many exceeded six inches in length, and three and a half in breadth. Traces of cattle were found in various places as low as Hove's Rock, which are now doubtless straying through the country. . . . Our horses have recruited themselves exceedingly within

the last ten days, and being lightly laden, I have great hopes of being enabled to reach Bathurst before our provisions are altogether expended; we have now left but four pounds and a half of flour, and the same quantity of pork per man; our chief dependence must be on the success of our dogs for any additional supplies, and in such a country as the present, we have no fear of being in want of food. . . . Fish and emus were procured in great quantities in the course of the afternoon.

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition into northern and central Australia. At this date the party was in the Nicholson River area of the Gulf of Carpentaria.

We collected a great quantity of *Terminalia* gum, and prepared it in different ways to render it more palatable. The natives, whose tracks we saw everywhere in the scrub, with frequent marks where they had collected gum—seemed to roast it. It dissolved with difficulty in water: added to gelatine soup, it was a great improvement; a little ginger, which John had still kept, and a little salt, would improve it very much. But it acted as a good lenient purgative on all of us.

Terminalia is a genus of trees found in the tropics. Many of the species are used in traditional medicine.

1858: Australia

From the journal of John McDouall Stuart's first expedition into the inland of the continent.

On the Shore at Streaky Bay. Started at 11 a.m. to make Mr. Gibson's station. The horses did not arrive until 10.30, as they had gone back on their tracks of yesterday. During the time Forster was after them, I managed to shoot a crow, and cooked him in the ashes. We had him for breakfast—the first food we have had for the last three days; it was very agreeable to taste and stomach, for we were beginning to feel the cravings of nature rather severely. . . . Twenty-four miles to Mr. Gibson's station, where we were received and treated with great kindness, for which we were very thankful. We enjoyed a good supper, which, after three days' fasting, as may readily

be imagined, was quite a treat.

1874: Australia

The John Forrest expedition party travelling into the heart of Western Australia was in the Warburton range, and completely out of water:

Windich shot a wurrung [a nail-tailed wallaby, *Onychogalea lunata*], which he said had lately drunk water. When we reached the gully, many tracks were seen ascending it, and we felt sure we should find water, and surely enough we soon reached a most splendid spring, running down the gully half a mile. We were elated and very thankful. Windich got a shot at an emu, but missed it. After having a good drink we went back and got our horses, reaching the spring with them after dark.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1668: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys.

And going through Leadenhall, it being market-day, I did see a woman ketched that had stolen a shoulder of mutton off of a butcher's stall, and carrying it wrapped up in a cloth in a basket. The jade was surprized, and did not deny it; and the woman so silly that took it as to let her go, only taking the meat.

1773: Scotland

From James Boswell's *The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson*: "At dinner, Dr. Johnson ate several plate-fulls of Scotch broth, with barley and peas in it, and seemed very fond of the dish. I said 'You never ate it before.'—Johnson "No, sir; but I don't care how soon I eat it again.'"

1877: USA

From the letter of Howard Ruede, who left Pennsylvania to set up a new life as a homesteader on the great Kansas plains. He moved into his "dugout" on this day

and wrote home to his family: “I dug some potatoes out of my patch. . . . I got some that weighed over a pound apiece and would make enough for a meal for two.”

August 23

A SWEET POTATO PRODUCT

1943: USA

Time magazine announced a new product in this day’s edition.

A bright new future for the sweet potato was revealed in Alabama last week. At Alabama Polytechnic Institute, Lamar Minis Ware, professor of horticulture, demonstrated a surprising array of new concoctions he had produced from sweet potatoes—candy bars, taffy, cookies, breakfast foods, ice-cream flavoring, piecrust flour, milk shakes.

His product, “Alayam,” the result of two years’ work, is a dehydrated form of the vegetable. It is golden brown, crunchy, tastes like caramel taffy. From this basic substance Potatoman Ware has developed some 20 varieties of food, ranging from flakes to a solid bar.

As candy, Alayam is combined with peanuts, pecans, coconut or pineapple. No ordinary confection, it tests high as food, rich in carbohydrates (it has up to 48% sugar). It is not yet in commercial production, but Professor Ware hopes it will “become a standard item of food after the war.”

THAMES FISH

1983: England

A project to clean up the Thames and restore its fish population began to show results in the early 1980s, with a sustained run of salmon occurring in 1982. In 1983, the Thames Water Authority offered a prize for the first angler using a rod and line to land an authenticated salmon. On August 23, 1983, Londoner Russell Doig was successful with his catch of a six-pound salmon.

THE POTATO BLIGHT

1845: Britain

The editorial column of the *Gardener's Chronicle and Agricultural Gazette* of this day warned of the spreading potato blight, and the impending disaster:

A fatal malady has broken out amongst the potato crop. On all sides we hear of the destruction. In Belgium the fields are said to have been completely desolated. There is hardly a sound sample in Covent Garden Market. . . . As for a cure for this distemper, there is none. . . . One of our correspondents is already angry with us for not telling the public how to stop it; he ought to consider that Man has no power to arrest the dispensations of Providence. We are visited by a great calamity which we must bear.

The previous week's edition had given the first report of the appearance of the disease in England, in the form of a letter from Dr. Bell Salter on the Isle of Wight. Within a mere week, the extent of the disease was already becoming frighteningly obvious, as the above extract shows. In the edition of September 13 (see entry for that date), the *Gazette* reported the appearance of the blight in Ireland.

By September, *Phytophthora infestans* had destroyed 40 percent of the potato crop in Ireland, and ultimately resulted in the great Irish famine, or, as it was called in Gaelic, *an Gorta Mór* (the Great Hunger).

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1770: Australia

Captain James Cook claimed Australia as a British possession, noting in his diary, "The Land naturly produces hardly anything fit for man to eat and the Natives know nothing of Cultivation."

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1660: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys: “To Westminster hall, where I met with W. Symons, T. Doling and Mr. Booth, and with them to the Dogg, where we eat a Muske millon (the first that I have eat this year).”

Muske millon: the musk melon.

1681: London, England

From the diary of John Evelyn. He described a meal at the home of a local politician, at which everything was sourced from the estate.

I went to Wotton, and, on the following day, was invited to Mr. Denzil Onslow’s at his seat at Purford, where was much company, and such an extraordinary feast, as I had hardly seen at any country gentleman’s table. What made it more remarkable was, that there was not anything save what his estate about it did afford; as venison, rabbits, hares, pheasants, partridges, pigeons, quails, poultry, all sorts of fowl in season from his own decoy near his house, and all sorts of fresh fish. After dinner we went to see sport at the decoy, where I never saw so many herons.

August 24

SAINT BARTHOLOMEW’S DAY

Britain

From 1135 to 1855 the great Saint Bartholomew’s fair at Smithfield, close to the City of London, began on his feast day. The duration of the fair varied over the centuries from three days to two weeks. After the New Style calendar was finally adopted in Britain, it was held on September 3.

Many foods are associated with the feast day and the fair. Saint Bartholomew is the patron saint of butchers, due to the story that he was martyred by being flayed alive. Large amounts of meat were the order of the day—especially roast pig and roast beef. Gingerbread and currant buns were standard treats at all fairs, but at Saint Bart’s apples dipped in honey—the forerunner of our toffee apples, were also sold. Samuel Pepys recorded in his diary his attendance at the fair on August 31, 1661 (see this date), and his purchase of *fairings* (gingerbread).

Bartlemas Beef (from St. Bartholomew's Mass) was one of the traditional dishes on this day. In the following recipe, the author uses the adjective *rare* in the sense of "uncommonly fine."

To Make Rare Bartlemas Beef

Take a fat Brisket piece of beef and bone it, put it into so much water as will cover it, shifting it three times a day for three dayes together, then put it into as much white wine and vinegar as will cover it, and when it hath lyen twenty-four hours take it out and drye it in a cloth, then take nutmeg, ginger, cinnamon, cloves and mace, of each a like quantity, beaten small and mingled with a good handful of salt, strew both sides of the Beef with this, and roul it up as you do Brawn, tye it as close as you can; then put it into an earthen pot, and cover it with some paste; set it in the Oven with household bread, and when it is cold, eat it with mustard and sugar.

—*Cooks Guide* (1664), by Hannah Wolley

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1869: USA

Cornelius Swartwout, of Troy, New York, was granted Patent No. 94,043 for an "Improvement in Waffle-Irons." His invention was of a hinged device, with "a handle, connected with and forming part of the waffle iron, by means of which the same may be turned over without slipping, and without the possibility of burning the hand.

1920: USA

Elzear Josphe Drouillard, of Detroit, Michigan, was granted Patent No. 1,350,859 for a "Cone-rolling Machine" for ice-cream cones. The advantage of his new method was that it "would avoid the common problem of operators burning their hands while using the machine."

COFFEE & WAR

1861: American Civil War

The Union blockade meant that coffee was in short supply during the war. Coffee-drinkers became very creative in their attempts to find an acceptable substitute. A letter to the editor of the *Chronicle & Sentinel* of Greensboro, Georgia, on the coffee problem includes a recipe:

Having heard you were great coffee drinkers, and always relished a good cup, and knowing that you desired to run Lincoln's blockade into nonentity, to obtain a good cup, (such as you have no doubt often tasted at the French Market, New Orleans), I enclose to you the receipt—the very latest—for making the very best domestic coffee. This coffee, when made by the receipt, is of excellent flavor, and very nutritious. It is of sufficient strength, and not excitable in its action. It is mild, healthy, persuasive, and sufficiently exhilarating for any epicure. When you smell it, you will say “I believe it's Java”; when you taste it, you will say, “I think it is Java”; when you drink it, you exclaim (foreignly) “I'll pe tamn [sic] if it isn't Java coffee!” It is true, it has not that foreign accent; but by adding a little rich milk or cream, it speaks almost the foreign tongue. Try it, as an antidote for the blockade.

Receipt

Take the common garden beet, wash it clean, cut it up into small pieces, twice the size of a grain of coffee; put into the coffee toaster or oven, and roast as you do your coffee—perfectly brown. Take care not to burn while toasting it. When sufficiently dry and hard, grind it in a clean mill, and take half a common sized coffee cup of the grounds, and boil with one gallon water. Then settle with an egg, and send to the table, hot. Sweeten with very little sugar, and add good cream or milk. This coffee can be drank by children, with impunity, and will not (in my judgment) either impair sight or nerves. Col. Wm. W. D. Weaver and myself have tried it, and find it almost equal, when properly made, to either the Java, Brazilian or Mocha coffee. I am indebted to the Colonel for this excellent substitute; and as every man has his beet orchard, so has he his coffee. And like Cuffee, we exclaim, “bress God for dis blockade. Nigger now get him plenty of kophphee, and Mr. Lincoln am no where.”

P.S. There is a percentage of water in the beet which is extracted as you toast the coffee particles to a nice brown.

SWEET FANNY ADAMS

1867: England

The nation was shocked at the brutal murder of eight-year-old Fanny Adams in the town of Alton in Hampshire on this day. The child's body had been dismembered and dispersed over a wide area, and the chance that all her body parts had never been found led to the gruesome joke that she ended up in the Navy victuals. It was not long before her name became Navy slang for the less-than-delicious tins of mutton which were part of their regular provisions. A similar murder in 1895, of Harriet Lane by her married lover, also led to her name being used as slang for canned meat—particularly the chopped canned Australian meat that was exported to Britain in huge amounts in the second half of the nineteenth century. As another example of the grim humor of men in uniform, tinned steak and kidney was called “baby's head.”

LIBERATING THE RITZ

1944: Paris, France

The writer Ernest Hemingway claimed that he was the first to liberate the Paris Ritz after the Allied forces declared victory on this day. The Ritz had been the Nazi occupation headquarters in Paris during World War II. The bar in the hotel is now named the Hemingway Bar.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1578: Straits of Magellan

Francis Pretty was one of Francis Drake's Gentlemen at Arms. He accompanied Drake on his circumnavigation of the world. The voyage began in November 1577; by August 24 they were in the Straits of Magellan. Pretty wrote: “The 24. of August we arrived at an island in the Straits [of Magellan] where we found great store of fowl which could not fly, of the bigness of geese; whereof we killed in less than one day 3,000, and victualled ourselves thoroughly therewith.” These big flightless fowl were what we now call Magellanic Penguins.

1819: USA

Alonzo Delano (1809–1874) traveled overland to California in 1849–1851.

The day was smoky, and our view was limited and indistinct, but we could see in the hazy atmosphere the bold line of the Sierra Nevada, which divided us from our anxious desires. . . . Our bacon, flour, meal, sugar and vinegar, were all gone, and we had to take felon's fare—hard bread, and water—and this we felt to be much better than nothing; indeed, we were much better off than many others on the road. Mr. Watson had an old cow that the crows had been quarreling over for a long time; and thinking a little fresh beef, (save the mark!) might be acceptable, he slaughtered her. There could not be more rejoicing around the carcass of a camel by the Arabs on the desert, than we evinced around the poor, worn out, “knocked down” brute, and we looked upon it as a sort of God-send, and like to have surfeited ourselves. Being out of meat, it seemed as if our stomachs only craved it the more, and our appetites grew sharper at every halt. Distance, eighteen miles.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1790: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde: “Sent one Dozen and one very fine Apricots from my best Tree called Anson Apricot, to Mr. and Mrs. Custance at Weston House by my maid Betty. They sent us back some fine black Grapes which came from Mackay's Hot House, a Gardner at Norwich.”

1842: USA

From Nathaniel Hawthorne's *American Journals*.

I left home at five o'clock this morning to catch some fish for breakfast. I shook our summer apple-tree, and ate the golden apple which fell from it. Methinks these early apples, which come as a golden promise before the treasures of autumnal fruit, are almost more delicious than anything that comes afterwards. We have but one such tree in our orchard; but it supplies us with a daily abundance, and probably will do so for at least a week to

come.

1971: Greece

The novelist Patrick White wrote to Elizabeth Harrower on this day from Athens, and described an earlier part of his journey, when he was in Spain.

Everywhere the food was dreary; they really only have three dishes: gazpacho (I think I can make a better one than we got), paella (nowhere as good as one we ate at St. Ives, cooked in the gare by a Redfern Spaniard) and their rather heavy potato omelette. Otherwise chunks of toro or vaca, all very tough.

August 25

LUTHER, WITCHES, AND BUTTER

1538

Martin Luther (1483–1546) was a key figure in the Protestant Reformation movement. A collection of his sayings and opinions was published under the title *Divine Discourses* (later, *Table Talk*) in 1566. The book contains a report of a discussion on this day in which Luther refers to the commonly held belief that the spoiling of milk and butter was due to the activity of witches. It also includes Luther's recommendations that such witches should be burned.

August 25, 1538, the conversation fell upon witches who spoil milk, eggs, and butter in farm yards. Dr. Luther said: "I should have no compassion on these witches; I would burn all of them. We read in the old law, that the priests threw the first stone at such malefactors. 'Tis said this stolen butter turns rancid, and falls to the ground when any one goes to eat it."

WORLD WHEAT

1933: London, England

Twenty-one nations signed an agreement on this day at the World Wheat Conference, which determined strategies to combat a worldwide glut of wheat

and the necessity for wide-scale dumping of the grain. Under the terms of the agreement, maximum export quotas were set for producer nations.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1810: Britain

Peter Durand was granted Royal Letters Patent No. 3,372, for his method of preserving food using tin cans. His invention:

Excludes air from the containing vessels of glass, earthenware, tin, &c., by means of corks (formed of pieces glued together so that the pores of that substance shall be in a cross direction to the aperture into which the corks are driven), ground glass stoppers, or screw caps. A small aperture is left unclosed whilst the contents of the vessel are heated by means of a bath of cold water raised gradually to the boiling temperature, a bath of steam, or an oven. The aperture is completely closed as soon as the effect of the heat has taken place.

1958: Japan

Momofuku Ando, the Taiwanese-Japanese businessman who founded the Nissin Food Products Company, marketed the first pre-cooked instant noodles on this day—Chickin Ramen. The product was initially an expensive luxury. On September 18, 1971, Ando released his Cup Noodle in a polystyrene container.

Ando was also instrumental in developing guidelines for the instant-food industry.

FOOD SAFETY

1998: USA

President Clinton signed an executive order in relation to food safety.

Today, I signed an Executive Order establishing the President's Council on Food Safety. To strengthen and focus our efforts to coordinate food safety policy and resources and improve food safety for American consumers, the Council will develop a comprehensive strategic plan for Federal food safety

Council will develop a comprehensive strategic plan for Federal food safety activities, ensure the most effective use of Federal resources through the development and submission of coordinated food safety budgets, and oversee the Joint Institute for Food Safety Research.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769: Polynesia

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks.

Standing to the Southward. It was this day a twelvemonth since we left England, in consequence of which a peice of cheshire cheese was taken from a locker where it had been reservd for this occasion and a cask of Porter tappd which provd excellently good, so that we livd like English men and drank the hea[l]ths of our freinds in England.

1811: USA

From the journal of Wilson Price Hunt's overland expedition in 1811–1812:

While trudging through these barren, arid mountains we could no longer kill buffalo, for they usually keep near water. However, on the 25th we found a few in this area. The hunters stalked them and killed five. The day before, some of the company had eaten a wolf, which they found quite good. We made camp near a third tributary of the Powder River.

1873: USA

Mattie V. Oblinger wrote home to her family from the prairies of Nebraska.

[Y]ou do not know how many things a person can do with out until they try. . . .I thought I would have some cakes for dinner I was going to make Jumbles but Giles had no rolling pin or cake cutter so I made a plate of pancakes as we always term it well I had no eggs but I thought I would try it with out I tell you what I used nearly a teacup of sugar about half teacup of cream filled up with water makeing teacup ful of cream & water a small lump of butter and a little soda enough flour to make quite stiff and I never made any better pancake in my life try it some time I make Pancakes

altogether without eggs We used to think if we had no eggs we could not mak Pancakes but I have got bravely over that try some time take equal parts of sour & sweet milk soda and salt and see how nice and light they are it is my way of makeing them. . . .I will tell who all was here for dinner yesterday Mr & Mrs Bumgardner and two children Mr Heckman (the preacher) and Mr Icely It rained so that Bumgardner could not get home I tell you we had good time bedding them there is more than one way of doing in Neb If you dont believe it come and see Well I had to make buiscuit for breakfast I wanted the boy to go to Elliotts and get some millik but they said I could make them withe out so I tried it I took Salt and Soda and Alum and water well I got pretty good buicuit but I suppose you do not think so shortning is not the style here for buiscuit.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1794: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde.

At three o'clock this Afternoon we walked to Hungate Lodge, and there dined. . . .We had a very genteel Dinner—First Course at the upper End, stewed Tench, Veal Soup, best part of a Rump of Beef boiled, 2 rost Chicken and a Ham, Harrico Mutton, Custard Puddings, backed Mutton Pies, Mashed Potatoes in 3. Scallop Shells brown'd over, Roots 2. Dishes. Second Course. At the upper End, Rabbitts fricasseed, at the lower End Couple of Ducks rosted, Trifle in the Middle, blamange, Cheesecakes, Maccaroni, and small Rasberry-Tartlets. Desert of Fruit mostly that sent by me to them, peaches, Nectarines and three kinds of Plumbs.

August 26

SOUFFLÉ POTATOES

1837: France

Tradition has it that soufflé potatoes were created on this day. The occasion was the opening of the first railway line in France, from Paris to St Germain-en-laye. King Louis Phillipe and Queen Marie Amelia were running late for the

King Louis Philippe and Queen Marie Amélie were running late for the ceremony, so, the story goes, the chef removed the potatoes from the pan in which they were frying. When the royal guests arrived he put the potatoes back in the pan, in the fat, and the potatoes puffed up—and voila! Soufflé potatoes were “invented.”

JERSEY FOOD

1833: Jersey, Britain

The Royal Jersey Agricultural and Horticultural Society was founded on this day. One of the rules adopted was that an annual dinner and a public breakfast would be held. At these meals political discussion was to be banned, and “the meats, fruits and vegetables at the repasts be a product of the Island.”

A ROAST WITHOUT EQUAL

1986: USA

New Orleans chef Paul Proudhomme registered the trademark “Turducken” on this day for a “Combination Turkey, Duck and Chicken Entree for Consumption On or Off the Premises”; stated first use, November 27, 1980. The practice of stuffing one animal with another (and another, and another . . .) is called “engastration,” and it has a history going back at least to Roman times.

Perhaps the most spectacular famous example of engastration is that described by the French gourmand Grimod de la Reynière in his huge work *L’Almanach des Gourmands*, published in 1812. He called it his *Rôti Sans Pareil* (Roast without Equal).

Stuff a fine large olive with capers and anchovy fillets and—

Place it inside a delicate *Bec-Figue* (a small bird), from which you cut the head and feet, and—

Enclose it in the body of a fine plump *ortolan*, which you truss neatly, and—

Insert in the body of a fat *mauviette* (a lark), from which you cut not only

the head and feet, but also dissect the principal bones; then cover it with a thin slice of lard, and

Put it into the body of a *grive* (thrush), which you must also dissect and prepare in the same manner, and—

Stuff inside a fat and juicy *caille* (quail), a wild one in preference to a tame one;

Then enclose your *caille*, which you should cover with a vine-leaf, as a coat-of-arms to show its nobility, in the body of a *vanneau* (lapwing), which is boned and trussed to enable it to be—

Inserted into the body of a *pluvier dore* (golden plover), which in its turn is covered with lard, and—

Enclosed in a young *woodcock*, as tender and as plump as Mademoiselle Volnais (a famous actress of the day), and quite as well kept. Having first rolled it in grated bread crumbs, you then

Place it in the body of a *teal*, which is neatly trussed and prepared, and then

Put into a *guinea-hen*, which you secrete in the body of a young *Wild-duck*. Enclose your duck inside a *chicken*, which should be as white as Madame Belmont, as plump as Mademoiselle deVienne, and as fat as Mademoiselle Contat, but not quite so large (as other ladies of the stage).

Your chicken with its many amiable qualities should then be concealed inside of a young *pheasant*, chosen with care, and preserved until it has obtained the requisite degree of *haut gout*, without which it is not fit to be placed before a “gourmand”; you then

Place it in the body of a young tender and fat *goose*, wild of course, which is hidden from vulgar gaze by being placed in the body of a very fine hen *turkey*, which should be as white and as plump as *Mlle. Arskne*,

And last of all, place your turkey in the body of an *outarde* (a species of wild turkey or goose) and fill the interstices with Lucca Chestnuts, force meat, and a savory stuffing.

Having thus prepared your roast, put it into a pot sufficiently large, with onions piques with cloves, carrots, chopped ham, celery, a bouquet of thyme and parsley, mignonette, several slices of fat pork well salted. Pepper, salt, fine spices, coriander, and one or two sprigs of garlic. Then seal this pot hermetically with a strip of paste or clay and place it on a slow fire where the heat will penetrate it gradually, and let it remain twenty-four hours. Then uncover it; “*degraissez*” it, if necessary, and serve on a hot plate.

It is easy to imagine that the juices of so many different fowls amalgamated thoroughly by this slow process of cooking, and their different principles becoming so identified each with the other by this close connection, would give to this unequalled dish a most wonderful flavor in which you have combined the quintessence of the plain, the forest, the marsh, and the barnyard.

FOOD & WAR

1642: English Civil War

From the letters of Nehemiah Wharton, a sergeant in Holles’s redcoats during the Edgehill campaign:

Saturday I gathered a complete file of my own men about the country, and marched to Sir Alexander Denton’s park, who is a malignant fellow, and killed a fat buck, fastened his head upon my halbert, and commanded two of my pikes to bring the body after me to Buckingham, with a guard of musketeers coming thither. With part of it I feasted my captain, and with the rest several lieutenants, ensigns, and sergeants, and had much thanks for my pains.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1773: Scotland

From James Boswell’s *The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson*.

We breakfasted at Cullen. They set down dried haddocks broiled along

we breakfasted at Caith. They set down three haddocks broiled, along with our tea. I ate one; but Dr. Johnson was disgusted by the sight of them, so they were removed. . . . We dined at Elgin . . . we fared but ill at our inn here. Dr. Johnson said, this was the first time he had seen a dinner in Scotland that he could not eat.

1778: England

The English writer Frances (Fanny) Burney wrote in her diary about dinner with Samuel Johnson:

Streatham . . . Dr. Johnson came home to dinner. In the evening he was as lively and full of wit and sport as I have ever seen him; and Mrs. Thrale and I had him quite to ourselves; for Mr. Thrale came in from giving an election dinner (to which he sent two bucks and six pine apples) so tired, that he neither opened his eyes nor mouth, but fell fast asleep. . . . Just as we had got our biscuits and toast-and-water, which make the Streatham supper, and Which, indeed, is all there is any chance of eating after our late and great dinners, Mr. Lort suddenly said, “Pray, ma’am, have you heard anything of a novel that runs about a good deal, called *Evelina*?”

August 27

SOYER’S FIELD STOVE

1855: Crimea

Alexis Soyer’s greatest and most enduring invention was his field stove (see October 5). The stove was launched at a *Grand Martial Banquet al Fresco* on this day. The event was covered by Henry Mills Alden, the American editor of *Harper’s Magazine*.

But his crowning triumph was not witnessed by Lord Raglan—that gallant officer was then cold in his grave.

Soyer had invented a new camp cooking-stove, and he appointed the 27th of August as a grand field-day for the exhibition of his apparatus. Invitations to witness the field kitchen were sent to the leading officers in the French, English, and Sardinian armies.

Alexis set to work early in the morning, and in spite of all difficulties succeeded in getting every thing into tolerably good order for his great martial banquet alfresco. He made several messes with the soldiers' rations, and at the same expense, though he had introduced sauce and ingredients which could easily be added to the army stores without increasing the cost—thus making a nice variation in the meals so important to the health of a large body of men.

The bill of fare consisted of plain-boiled salt beef; ditto with dumplings; plain-boiled salt pork; ditto with peas-pudding; stewed salt pork and beef, with rice; French pot-au-feu; stewed fresh beef, with potatoes; mutton ditto, with haricot beans ox-cheek and ox-feet soups; Scotch mutton-broth; and common curry, made with fresh and salt beef.

By three o'clock the guests began to arrive. The stoves were in the open air, placed in a semicircle, and though in a state of ebullition, no one could perceive that any cooking was going on, except by raising the lids. It was a material point that no fire should be seen when the stoves were used in the trenches. A common table, made with a few boards, and garnished with soldiers' tin plates, iron forks, and spoons, completed this open-air dining-room. About four o'clock the reception commenced, and the chef fully explained the plan and construction of his apparatus, its simplicity, cleanliness, economy, and the case and certainty with which the men could regulate the heat and prepare the food according to his receipts.

—London, Crimean War, Turkey: A. B. Soyer's kitchen camp

TOLL HOUSE COOKIES

1940: USA

The Nestlé Company registered the trademark "Toll House" for their cookies, stating the first use of the name on April 10, 1940.

The recipe had been developed by Ruth Wakefield, co-owner and manager with her husband of the Toll House Inn, Boston, and New Bedford, Massachusetts. The story is that one day, on impulse, she broke up a bar of chocolate and added it to her regular butter cookie dough, expecting the pieces to melt in the cooking.

The new cookie became a regular treat at the inn, and its fame soon spread. The recipe was published in a Boston newspaper, and there was no stopping the progress of its fame. Subsequently, in the 1930s, the Nestlé Company bought the rights to the recipe and had it printed on the chocolate bar label.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1818: Australia

From John Oxley's journal of his expedition in 1818 to explore the Macquarie River region.

[S]ome hundreds of kangaroos and emus were seen in the course of the day. We killed several, the dogs being absolutely fatigued with slaughter: the game was by no means shy, but came close up to us, as if to examine us. Indeed I do not think they are much disturbed by natives, of whom we have seen few signs in this neighbourhood.

1820: At Sea

From *The Journal of Mr William Hamilton Surgeon & Superintendent for the Ship "Maria" on its second passage from England to Van Dieman's Land as a Convict transport between 16th June 1820 and 6th December 1820*: "Light winds from the N-East. Bedding up. Prison decks cleaned. Mustered and inspected Convicts. . . . Issued half a pint of beer to each Convict to be continued each Sunday and meat days."

1836: USA

From missionary Narcissa Whitman's journal of her journey in 1836 from New York, across the Rocky Mountains, to Oregon and beyond.

Came in sight of the hill that leads to the Grande Ronde. This morning Mr. McLeod remained behind in pursuit of game, and did not come into camp until we had made a long nooning, although we had begun to feel a little concerned about him, yet about 3 o'clock he came into camp loaded with wild ducks, having taken twenty-two. Now, mother, he had just, as he always did during the whole journey, sent over nine of them. Here also, Richard caught fresh salmon, which made us another good meal, and if we

RICHARD caught fresh salmon, which made us another good meal, and if we had been out of provisions we might have made dinner upon the fresh-water clams, for the river was full of them.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1660: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys.

This morning comes one with a vessel of Northdowne ale from Mr. Pierce the purser to me. And after him, another with a brave Turkey carpet and a Jarre of Olives from Capt. Cuttance and a pair of fine Turtle-doves from John Burr to my wife. . . . And so home. Where about 10 a-clock Maj. Hart came to me—whom I did receive with wine and a dish of Anchoves, which made me so dry that I was ill with them all night and was fain to have the girl rise to fetch me some drink.

1842: USA

From Nathaniel Hawthorne's *American Journals*.

A peach-tree, which grows beside our house and brushes against the window, is so burdened with fruit that I have had to prop it up. I never saw more splendid peaches in appearance,—great, round, crimson-checked beauties, clustering all over the tree. A pear-tree, likewise, is maturing a generous burden of small, sweet fruit, which will require to be eaten at about the same time as the peaches. There is something pleasantly annoying in this superfluous abundance.

August 28

BIRTHDAY CAKE CANDLES

1801: Germany

The poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe was born on this day in 1749. In 1801 he spent his birthday in Gotha, at the summer-house of Prince August, where an

“excellent table” was kept. Goethe’s description of his birthday festivities includes one of the earliest mentions of the use of candles on birthday cake. He also alludes to the tradition of one extra candle—representing the coming year—being included, especially in the case of children. This candle was then kept to light the candles the following year.

They were minded with gracious attention to celebrate my birthday at a select banquet. In the usual courses themselves a difference was observable. At the dessert, however, the whole livery of the Prince entered in stately procession, the house-steward at the lead. The latter bore a large cake, flaming with parti-coloured wax-candles, which, amounting in number to some half-a-hundred, threatened to melt and consume each other, whereas, at children’s festivals of this kind, space enough is left for succeeding life-tapers.

FOOD & MOVIES

1987: Denmark

This was the opening night of *Babette’s Feast*, one of the great food movies of all time. The movie was based on a story by Isak Dinesen and directed by Gabriel Axel. It relates the events which follow the sudden arrival of a refugee chef from Paris to a remote village in Jutland. Babette is given employment by two elderly spinster sisters who are the social and spiritual leaders of their tiny community. Life in the village, under the mentorship of the sisters, is pious, cheerless, and austere. For fourteen years Babette works for the sisters, never telling her story and never returning to Paris. Suddenly, she wins a lottery prize and decides to prepare a sumptuous meal for the sisters and some guests. The offer is met with both interest and anxiety by the community, who fear the potential for gluttony and other sins. Needless to say, in the end, many issues beyond the mere physical are transcended over this meal.

The dinner has become a favorite reenactment of movie and food enthusiasts. The menu was:

Potage à la Tortue (Turtle Soup) with an Amontillado sherry

Blinis Demidoff au Caviar (Buckwheat pancakes with caviar, garnished with sour cream)

Caille en Sarcophage (Quail in puff pastry, with foie gras and truffles)

Salade of chicory and walnuts, with sauce vinaigrette

Cheese, served with papaya, figs, grapes, pineapple, and pomegranate

Savarin au Rhum avec des Figs et Fruits Glacées (A sponge cake soaked in rum, with glace fruit)

Rare wines accompanied the meal, which was served on the finest china, crystal, and linen also purchased by Babette.

The meal ends with the revelation that Babette has spent all her winnings on this one meal, and that she is not, as was assumed, going to return to her former life as head chef at a fine restaurant. When the sisters exclaim that she is now poor, she replies, “An artist is never poor.”

RESTAURANTS & HOTELS

1971: Berkeley, California

Chez Panisse, the restaurant owned and run by chef Alice Waters, opened on this day. The menu for the first meal was: pate en croûte, duck with olives, salad, and almond tart, for a price of \$3.95.

The restaurant is run according to the philosophy of “Fresh, Local, Seasonal.” Dining is not according to the usual restaurant *à la carte* style, but instead a fixed menu is served for a fixed price. The restaurant is only open for dinner and the menu changes every night, depending on what is available that day from suppliers and markets.

FOOD FOR THE POOR

1731: Britain

Matthew Marryot was the manager of several workhouses in Britain. In his report on the St. Dunstan’s workhouse on this day he gave the bill of fare for the inhabitants:

They have roast or boiled Beef 4 Days in the Week for Dinner, viz. Sundays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and other Days, Rice-Milk, or Dumplins. Breakfasts of Broth, or Milk-Porridge, and Suppers of Bread and Butter, or Cheese.

Flesh for the whole Week is bought and laid in every Saturday; Bread and Beer are furnished at the cheapest Rates, by a Baker and 2 Brewers in the Neighbourhood, who serve them alternately.

FOOD & WAR

1941: Britain, World War II

From the wartime diary of housewife Nella Last. The nervy housewife is gaining confidence with the realization of her own skills.

[T]here was a ring and Mrs Thompson, our canteen head, was at the door. She had come to tell me that we will have the two new American mobile canteens any time now, as well as our own Jolly Roger, and also a “first grade” canteen for the soldiers. She wants me to give an afternoon and / or evening as advisory cook. . . . It’s what I’ve always wanted to do—I am realising more each day what a knack of dodging and cooking and managing I possess, and my careful economies are things to pass on, not hide as I used to!

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1877: USA

In a letter written on this day, Howard Ruede provided an inventory of his worldly possessions for his family in Pennsylvania, listing, besides food and staples, his kitchen equipment for his Kansas homestead: “[S]tove, tin wash boiler, 2 iron pots, teakettle, 2 spiders [a cast-iron frying pan with short legs to stand among coals on the hearth]. 3 griddles, 3 bread pans, 2 tin cups, a steamer, coffee pot, coal oil can, gridiron, wash basin and 2 lb. Nails.”

1783: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde. He dined this day at the home of “Mr. Townshends at Honingham” along with other guests, including Mrs. Cornwallis, the widow of the late Archbishop of Canterbury. “There was two Courses at Dinner besides the Desert. Each course nine Dishes, but most of the things spoiled by being so frenchified in dressing. I dined on some fried Soals, some stewed Beef with Caper Sauce and some Hare rosted, but very insipid.”

Woodforde was not alone in his dislike or distrust of “frenchified” food. The English disdain for French food was obvious in the words of Hannah Glasse, author of the popular book *The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy* (1747), who famously said, “[I]f Gentlemen will have French Cooks, they must pay for French Tricks.” As an example, she comments on a French cook’s use of “six pounds of butter to fry twelve eggs” when “every Body knows, that understand Cooking, that Half a Pound is full enough.”

Perhaps the parson would have enjoyed a hare roasted according to Mrs. Glasse’s recipe:

To Roast a Hare

Take your Hare when it is cas’d [skinned] and make a Pudding; take a Quarter of a Pound of Sewet, and as much Crumbs of Bread, a little Parsley shred fine, and about as much Thyme as will lie on a Sixpence, when shred; an Anchovy shred small, a very little Pepper and Salt, some Nutmeg, two Eggs, a little Lemon-peel: Mix all this together, and put it into the Hare. Sew up the Belly, spit it, and lay it to the Fire, which must be a good one. Your Dripping-pan must be very clean and nice. Pour two Quarts of Milk and Half a Pound of Butter into the Pan; keep basting it all the while it is roasting with the Butter and Milk till the Whole is used, and your Hare will be enough. You may mix the Liver in the Pudding, if you like. You must first parboil it, then chop it fine.

1819

John Keats wrote to his sister, Fanny, on this day.

Give me Books, fruit, French wine and fine whether (sic) and a little music out of doors, played by somebody I do not know . . . and I can pass a summer very quietly without caring much. . . . Gardens—apple tasting—near tasting—plumb judging—apricot nibbling—peach scrunching—

pear tasting plum judging apricot mulling peach scratching
Nectarine-sucking and Melon carving. I have also great feeling for
antiquated cherries full of sugar cracks—and a white currant tree kept for
company. I admire lolling on a lawn by a water-lilied pond to eat white
currants and see gold fish: and go to the Fair in the Evening if I'm good.
There is not much hope for that—one is sure to get into some mess before
evening.

1856: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau.

First watermelon. Now the black cherries in sprout-lands are in their prime,
and the black choke-berries just after huckleberries and blueberries. They
are both very abundant this year. The branches droop with cherries. Those
on some trees are very superior to others. The bushes are weighed down
with choke-berries, which no creature appears to gather. This crop is as
abundant as the huckleberries have been. They have a sweet and pleasant
taste enough, but leave a mass of dry pulp in the mouth. But it is worth the
while to see their profusion, if only to know what nature can do.
Huckleberries are about given up, low blueberries more or less shrivelled,
low blackberries done, high blackberries still to be had. Viburnum nudum
berries are beginning; I already see a few shrivelled purple ones amid the
light green. Poke berries also begun.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1805: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific
Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day William Clark wrote: “I purchased
Some fish roe Those Sammon which I live on at present are pleasant eating,
notwithstanding they weaken me verry fast and my flesh I find is declineing.”

1836: USA

From missionary Narcissa Whitman's journal of her journey in 1836 from New
York, across the Rocky Mountains, to Oregon and beyond.

We nooned upon Grande Ronde river. . . . The camas grows here in abundance, and it is the principal resort of the Cayuses and many other tribes, to obtain it, as they are very fond of it. It resembles an onion in shape and color, when cooked is very sweet and tastes like a fig. Their manner of cooking them is very curious: They dig a hole in the ground, throw in a heap of stones, heat them to a red heat, cover them with green grass, upon which they put the camas, and cover the whole with earth. When taken out it is black. This is the chief food of many tribes during winter.

August 29

CHOP SUEY

1896: New York

A charming story has it that *Chop-Suey* was invented on this day. The story is not true, of course, but another important event did happen, and it is related conceptually, if not actually, to the invention of the dish.

On August 29, 1896, the viceroy of China, Li Hung Chang, was entertained at a dinner at the Waldorf. Excitement at Chang's visit was not confined to diplomatic circles. The general population was incredibly intrigued by this powerful leader in his yellow jacket and—most amazingly—his skill with chopsticks! Thousands turned out to watch his progress to the Waldorf for the dinner. It was, of course, also a marvelous day for the press, who enthusiastically seized the opportunity to report on such an exotic event.

Chang's food preferences were of great interest. The *New York Times* reported that

other Chinese might tempt fate by consuming strange viands placed before them, but Earl Li, who has escaped safely from the plague, famine, rebellion, and the bullet of a Japanese assassin, would not risk such an experiment. . . . For the first time in the history of the Waldorf, Chinese chefs have prepared Chinese dishes in Chinese pots, pans, and skillets. And the dishes they have cooked have created more curiosity and consternation than the presence of the great Viceroy himself.

So Chang had familiar food cooked by his own chefs while the American

So, Chang had familiar food cooked by his own chefs, while the American dignitaries sat down to the following very conservative menu:

Crevisses

Consommé de Volaille en gelée

Filets de kingfish à la Tourneville—Salade de concombres

Ris de Veau à la Daubigny—Pois Français

Grouse du Printemps, rôti—Salade Romaine

Omelette soufflé aux Fraises

Fromages—Café

Sadly, the details of Chang's meal do not seem to have been recorded, but somewhere out of the interest and confusion, the myth of the origin of Chop Suey was born.

Chop Suey is unequivocally an American, not a Chinese, dish, and just as unequivocally, the phrase was already in use for a decade or so. *The Oxford English Dictionary* says that the phrase is derived from the Cantonese *shap sui*, meaning "mixed bits," and was first recorded in print in 1888 with the definition, "A staple dish for the Chinese gourmand is chow chop svey [sic], a mixture of chickens' livers and gizzards, fungi, bamboo buds, pigs' tripe, and bean sprouts stewed with spices." Within a few years of Chang's visit, however, recipes for chop suey began to appear in newspapers and on menus. The American connection was confirmed in 1904 in another newspaper report: "One of the Chinese merchants of New York . . . explained that chop suey is really an American dish, not known in China, but believed by Americans to be the one great national dish of the Celestials."

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

2006: USA

Alexander Stenzel, of Pacific Palisade, California, received Design Patent No. D527165 for "the ornamental design for a cucumber sandwich." This appears to be a hollowed-out cucumber, with the short piece cut off the end, then being

be a hollowed-out cucumber, with the short piece cut off the end then being inverted and used as a cork. Presumably the cucumber is stuffed with some sort of filling.

If the dearth of information on this invention is any indication, the sandwich was not a resounding commercial success.

FOOD & WAR

1475: France

The Treaty of Picquigny was signed on this day, after suitable financial settlements were agreed upon, and officially ended the Hundred Years War between England and France. Essentially, Louis XI paid the English to go home and stay home.

Louis XI threw a grand feast after the treaty was signed, and apparently remarked: “I have chased the English out of France more easily than my father ever did; for my father drove them out by force of arms, whereas I have driven them out with venison pies and good wine.”

ANNIVERSARY

1915: Chicago

This was the birthday of Nathan Pritikin, the founder of the Pritikin diet, which was popular in the 1980s. Pritikin developed his diet to manage his own heart disease. The principles were based on what he called “mankind’s original meal plan,” and were explained in his best-selling book *The Pritikin Program for Diet and Exercise*. In essence, the diet consisted of minimally processed foods and very little meat, and was high in complex carbohydrates and fiber and low in fat. His regime also included forty-five minutes of walking each day.

I don’t live to eat, I eat to live.

–Nathan Pritikin

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1805: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. Several of the party kept journals, and on this day Patrick Gass wrote: “The fish they take in this river are of excellent kinds, especially the salmon, the roes of which when dried and pounded make the best of soup.”

1819: USA

Alonzo Delano (1809–1874) traveled overland to California in 1849–1851.

We remained in our excellent camp till noon, and then drove down the smooth valley, crossing two fine creeks which made down from the mountains, and halted for the night in a cluster of willows, on the margin of another creek. While strolling through the willows, by paths which led to the brook, our men found a basket hanging to a tree, which contained perhaps two bushels of small fish, dried in the sun—a portion of the winter stores of the savages. In the absence of meat, we roasted some of these on the coals, and found them very palatable. A mile from camp, under the mountain, were half a dozen dwellings of the Indians. These were conical in form, about ten feet in diameter, built of grass thrown over a light framework of willows. I wandered out to them, but they were untenanted, having probably been vacated on the appearance of the first trains. Distance, eight miles.

1877: USA

From the letters of Howard Ruede, in his new home in Kansas.

Yesterday Heiser went to the mill and brought us 100 lbs of flour. . . . Pa went to see if Mrs Hoot could let us have bread, and while he was gone I tried my hand at biscuits, and succeeded, much to our satisfaction. It was good I made the biscuit, for Pa came back without bread. For supper we had steamed potatoes, hot biscuit, a few roasting ears [of corn] I managed to secure in my patch, and coffee. It was about 9 o'clock when we had supper.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1663: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys.

Thence to my wife, and calling at both Exchanges buying stockings for her and myself; and also at Leadenhall, where she and I, it being candlelight, bought meat for tomorrow, having ne'er a maid to do it; and I myself bought, while my wife was gone to another shop, a leg of beef, a good one, for sixpence, and my wife says is worth my money. So walked home with a woman carrying our things.

1802: Australia

Lord Hobart (a British Tory politician) wrote to Governor Philip King on this day. The colony was fourteen years old.

The introduction of beer into general use among the inhabitants would certainly lessen the consumption of spirituous liquors. I have therefore in conformity with your suggestion taken measures for furnishing the colony with a supply of ten tons of Porter, six bags of hops, and two complete sets of brewing materials.

August 30

THE DOVER BANQUET

1839: Dover, England

A great banquet was given on this day by the *Cinque Ports* in honor of "that great man and illustrious warrior," the Duke of Wellington. The banquet was held in a magnificently decorated pavilion erected for the purpose (at a cost of nearly £1,200) in Priory Meadow.

The *Kentish Observer* reported on the dinner:

The dinner service at the Duke's table was of the most magnificent description, the knives having handles of gold. This service was the same which was used at the civic banquet, when her present Majesty had

honoured the city of London with a visit. The tables for the company were laid out in a very tasteful manner, and the following is the bill of fare:

25 tables, 25 each; 26 ditto, 23 each; 1 ditto, 124; Duke's table, 172: 29 quarters of lamb, 56 dishes roast veal, 56 ditto boiled beef, 28 ditto roast tongues, 120 couple chickens, 40 turkey poults, 28 hams, 56 tongues, 120 pigeon pies, 240 venison ditto, 180 fruit ditto, 160 custard puddings, 200 lobsters, 200 salads, cucumbers, pickles, &c. Dessert, &c.

A ROYAL BAPTISM

1594: Scotland

Prince Henry (b. February 19), the first-born son of King James VI and Queen Anne (of Denmark), was baptized on this day. A celebratory banquet was held after the ceremony, in the Great Hall of Stirling Castle, as was usual. Medieval feasts were not just about food—they were full-scale pageants which often went on for days, and included music, dancing, parades, jousting, plays, and all sorts of games. The entertainments at this celebration were as extravagant and spectacular as the king could make them, and the theatrics at the banquet itself were spectacular in the extreme.

All elements of this sort of pageant were imbued with symbolic significance, of course, with the over-riding message being one of power and divine right. There could be no better opportunity for propaganda for James, with a new son and heir, an aging, childless queen on the throne of England, and an audience which included the most powerful English and international leaders and ambassadors.

One of James's wishes was for the entry into the banqueting hall of a real lion drawing a chariot, but it was feared that the crowds and lights and noise might have "commoved his tameness" and caused real danger, so it was replaced by a symbolically enslaved Moor in rich clothing and golden chains.

The most amazing banquet entertainment was the delivery of the fish course. A fully rigged eighteen-foot vessel "sailed" into the banquet hall on a twenty-four-foot long "sea," by means which were a mystery to the guests. The forty-foot mast carried James's own colors and those of Denmark; the crew were the gods and mythical creatures of the sea, and the cargo was "such things as the sea affords." If this were not spectacular enough in itself, the thirty-six brass guns

aboard the vessel fired off a salvo as the snip sailed into the banquet hall.

LAST MEAL

1997: Paris

Princess Diana and her fiancé, Dodi Fayed, chose the room service menu on this evening. They ate a first course of scrambled eggs with mushrooms and asparagus, after which Diana had sole with vegetables tempura, and Fayed, turbot. They both died in a car crash in the early hours of the next morning.

TV COOKING SHOW

1946: USA

The first episode of the first networked television cooking show, *I Love to Eat*, aired on American television on this day. The host was James Beard, the man sometimes called “the Father of American gastronomy,” and Beard was “presented” by Elsie the cow, the symbol of the sponsors, the Borden company. The show initially ran for fifteen minutes, but was increased to thirty minutes the following April before being discontinued in May.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1819: USA

From the overland journey to California of Alonzo Delano.

[I]f possible, I determined to walk forward to the junction, to meet those trains, and accordingly set out, alone. We found that, although our provisions had given out, our appetites rather increased than diminished, and it was desirable to stop the grumblings of the stomach.

I walked very fast for six miles. . . . As I descended on the other side, I saw a train of six wagons. . . . My hope of supplies was blasted, and not an ounce of food could be procured; we were therefore compelled to stick to our hard bread. Some of the men of the Missouri train reported that there were plenty of fish in the stream, and a proposition was made to make a

seine and drag the river. His party I joined with pleasure; and taking an old wagon cover, we proceeded to a beaver-dam, and while a party went above to drive the fish down, we waded in the deep water with the primitive net. In three hauls we caught fifty-five fine trout, and going with them to their camp, we had a delicious feast, made the more acceptable by a sharpened appetite. While there, three footmen came up, begging to buy a little flour. They had belonged to a pack train, and their horses and mules had all been stolen by the Indians at the little salt lake between High Rock canon and the Sierra Nevada Mountain, and they were getting through in the only way which was left.

1836: USA

From missionary Narcissa Whitman's journal of her journey in 1836 from New York, across the Rocky Mountains, to Oregon and beyond.

On following the course of the stream on which we encamped last night we found cherries in abundance, and had time to stop and gather as many as we wished. They are very fine—equal to any we find in the States. When we arrived Mr. Gray had the dinner waiting for us. This afternoon the men rested and made preparations to enter Walla Walla. The men who went for the animals returned late. We all regretted this hindrance, for Mr. McLeod intended to see Walla Walla to-day and return again with a muskmelon for Mrs. Whitman (so he said). he will go in tomorrow. It is the custom of the country to send heralds ahead to announce the arrival of a party and prepare for their reception.

1840: Australia

From the journal of Edward John Eyre (1815–1901), on an expedition into the inland of Central Australia.

Leaving the overseer to bring on the cart, I rode on a-head down the watercourse to trace the continuance of the water. The road I found to be very bad, and at twenty-three miles, upon tasting the water I found it as salt as the sea, and the bed of the creek quite impracticable for a cart; I therefore hurried back for seven miles, and halted the party at the last good water-hole, which was about sixteen miles from our yesterday's camp.

We had seen many ducks during the day, two of which I shot, and the black boy found a nest with fresh eggs in it, so that we fared more luxuriously than usual.

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia.

We encamped in a grove of Pandanus. The natives had just left, and the tea-tree bark was still smoking from the fire which had spread from their camp.

Large flights of the small white cockatoo came to the water. The flying-fox visited the blossoms of the tea-tree at night, and made an incessant screeching noise. Charley shot one of them, which was very fat, particularly between the shoulders and on the rump, and proved to be most delicate eating.

1873: Australia

Ernest Giles's second expedition into the central desert was near what is now Sentinel Hill. It was the birthday of one of his companions, and they named their campsite Tierkins Birthday Creek, and ate "an excellent supper of parrot soup" in celebration.

On reaching the camp, Gibson and Jimmy had shot some parrots and other birds, which must have flown down the barrels of their guns, otherwise they never could have hit them, and we had an excellent supper of parrot soup. Just here we have only seen parrots, magpies and a few pigeons, though plenty of kangaroo, wallaby, and emu; but have not succeeded in bagging any of the latter game, as they are exceedingly shy and difficult to approach, from being so continually hunted by the natives.

1877: USA

From *Sod-House Days*, Howard Ruede's narrative of his new home in Kansas.

Up by sunrise, and after breakfast to chopping again. We make our breakfast on bread and butter and coffee, but we find that it costs too much

to eat light bread. Flour at \$3 per cwt. and baking at 5c per loaf (40 loaves to the cwt.) makes bread cost about 11 ½ cents per loaf, and we eat a loaf at every meal. Now with 3 tincups of flour (about a pound) and a little butter, I can make enough biscuit to last three meals—so we expect to make biscuit a standard.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1794: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde: “We made some Cheesecakes to day, the first we ever made and exceeding good they were indeed.”

1773: Scotland

From James Boswell’s *The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson*.

When we had advanced a good way by the side of Lochness, I perceived a little hut, with an old-looking woman at the door . . . it was a wretched little hovel of dirt only. . . . In the middle of the room or space we entered, was a fire of peat, the smoke going out at a hole in the roof. She had a pot upon it, with goat’s flesh, boiling.

1819: USA

John Pintard, in New York, wrote to his daughter in New Orleans on this day.

I am happy to inform you that we are at length likely to be domestically comfortable. Nancy, the young girl who was with us from Princeton, was taken off, as usual, at an hour’s notice by her mother. . . . We were destitute of help for a week. Your Sister doing all the work, but we refrained from cooking & lived on rice & milk & chocolate until Saturday, when the weather being cool she roasted a sirloin elegantly. You must know she is an epicure and a good cook.

1856: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau.

I have come out this afternoon a-cranberrying, chiefly to gather some of the small cranberry, *Vaccinium Oxycoccus*, which Emerson says is the common cranberry of the north of Europe. This was a small object, yet not to be postponed, on account of imminent frosts, i.e., if I would know this year the flavor of the European cranberry as compared with our larger kind. I thought I should like to have a dish of this sauce on the table at Thanksgiving of my own gathering. I could hardly make up my mind to come this way, it seemed so poor an object to spend the afternoon on. . . . Let not your life be wholly without an object, though it be only to ascertain the flavor of a cranberry, for it will not be only the quality of an insignificant berry that you will have tasted, but the flavor of your life to that extent, and it will be such a sauce as no wealth can buy.

. . . I enjoyed this cranberrying very much, notwithstanding the wet and cold, and the swamp seemed to be yielding its crop to me alone, for there are none else to pluck it or to value it. I told the proprietor once that they grew here, but he, learning that they were not abundant enough to be gathered for the market, has probably never thought of them since. I am the only person in the township who regards them or knows of them, and I do not regard them in the light of their pecuniary value. I have no doubt I felt richer wading there with my two pockets full, treading on wonders at every step, than any farmer going to market with a hundred bushels which he has raked, or hired to be raked.

August 31

FOOD & WAR

1777: American Revolutionary War

Charles Herbert, an American prisoner taken by the English from the brig *Dalton*, kept a journal during his confinement in several prisons. On this day he wrote:

Many are strongly tempted to pick up the grass in the yard and eat it and some pick up old bones in the yard that have been laying in the dirt a week or ten days and pound them to pieces and suck them. Some will pick up

or ten days and pound them to pieces and suck them. Some will pick up snails out of the holes in the wall and from among the grass and weeds in the yard, boil them and eat them and drink the broth. . . . Our meat is very poor in general; we scarcely see a good piece once in a month. Many are driven to such necessity by want of provisions that they have sold most of the clothes off their backs for the sake of getting a little money to buy them some bread.

Samuel Cutler, Herbert's compatriot, wrote that the ration was:

3/4 lb. beef, 1 lb. bread, 1 qt. very ordinary beer, and a few greens per man for 24 hours. The beef when boiled weighs about 6 oz. This is our allowance daily, except Saturday, when we have 6 oz. cheese instead of the beef. To sleep upon, we have a hammock, straw bed and one very thin rug. . . . We are allowed every day to walk in the airing ground from 10 to 12, then locked in till 3 o'clock, then we are let out again till 7 o'clock, then in and locked up for the night.

1779: American Revolutionary War

By his Excellency Caesar Rodney, Esq; president, Captain-general and commander in chief of the Delaware State. A Proclamation:

WHEREAS the General Assembly of the said State, on the ninth day of December last, passed an act prohibiting the exportation of provisions therefrom, under certain exceptions and restrictions in the said act mentioned, until the first day of September ensuing. AND WHEREAS it is expedient, that an embargo should be laid from and after the said first day of September ensuing; I DO THEREFORE, by and with the Advice of the Privy-Council, and in virtue of the powers and authorities vested in me by the constitution of the said State, hereby lay an embargo prohibiting the inhabitants of this State, and all persons coming within the same, to export therefrom to any port or place, except Pennsylvania, Jersey, Maryland, and the Eastern Shore of Virginia, not being in the possession of the enemy, any Wheat, Flour, Rye, Indian-Corn, Rice, Bread, Beef, Pork, Bacon, live Stock, or any other provisions, except such provisions as shall be necessary for the stores only of any ships or vessels of war, or others, trading to and from this State from and after the said first day of September for and during the space of Thirty Days: Given under my hand and the great-seal of the state. at Newcastle. the thirtv-first day of August. in the year of our Lord

one-thousand seven hundred and seventy-nine.

Given under my hand and the great-seal of the state, at Newcastle, the thirty-first day of August, in the year of our Lord one-thousand seven hundred and seventy-nine.

1940: Vichy, France, World War II

The weekly allowance of rationed goods, per person, per week, was: sugar, 4 oz.; spaghetti, 6 oz.; rice, 1 1/2 oz.; margarine, 3 oz.

1942: Australia, World War II

Rationing of sugar began, the allowance being one pound a week per person, with special arrangements being made for housewives who needed to make jam.

SOCIAL FORCES AT WORK

1800: England

The people of Nottingham rioted over the high price of bread. Poor harvests and the impact of the Napoleonic wars had resulted in a shortage of wheat, and many were hungry. The story also includes an example of great charity on the part of corn (that is, wheat) suppliers. *The Date-Book of Memorable Events Connected with Nottingham and its Neighbourhood, 1750–1850* says:

Notwithstanding that Sunday was the last day of this month, it was marked as the commencement of a serious riot. A great increase in the prices of provisions, more especially of bread, had roused the vindictive spirit of the poorer classes to an almost ungovernable pitch. They began late in the evening, by breaking the windows of a baker in Millstone-lane, and in the morning proceeded, with an increase of numbers, and renewed impetuosity, to treat others of the same trade in the same unwelcome manner. Granaries were broken into at the canal wharfs, and it was really distressing to see with what famine-impelled eagerness many a mother bore away corn in her apron, to feed her offspring. The Volunteer Infantry were placed upon duty wherever the popular fury was displayed, while the civil authorities and the Dragoons from the Barracks exerted themselves in vain to induce the rioters

to desist from their purpose; for immediately on their being dispersed in one place, they collected in another. Thus matters continued, with little intermission, till Wednesday, the third of September, when one of the most awful storms of lightning, thunder, and rain, ever witnessed in this town, put a final end to the protracted disturbance.

During the latter part of the summer, the Corporation opened a subscription to assist the poor in providing their families with bread, which received very considerable support from a number of wealthy and humane inhabitants; “but by none so much,” records Blackner, “as by Messrs. Davison and Hawksley, of Arnold. They supplied an immense quantity of corn, considerably below the price they had given for it, for the use of their own workpeople. And what is very remarkable, when the corn was thus obtained to supply the poor with bread, which they could not otherwise obtain for money, there was neither wind nor water to grind it. These two worthy gentlemen remedied this misfortune, for they ground the corn in their own mill (which was turned by the machinery of their worsted mill), and sent the flour in their own waggons to Nottingham, free of all expense, which was sold at a reduced price by the Corporate servants, at the Malt Cross, to the eager multitude, and thus the horrors of a famine were expelled. These two gentlemen likewise took the batches of corn, of those who could raise them, from this town to Arnold, and ground them, and brought them back free of expense, so long as applicants could be found. For these benevolent and humane acts they received a tribute from thousands of hearts overflowing with the most grateful sensations; and Mr. Hawksley was presented with the freedom of the town; as was also Mr. Towle, of Broxtowe, who regularly brought corn to market, and sold it at a moderate price during this alarming period.

CHEESE

1696: France

A decree promulgated by the Languedoc Parliament in Toulouse granted the inhabitants of Roquefort sur Souzlon the exclusive right to mature the cheese.

1983

Camembert cheese received the *Appellation d'Origine Controlle* designation on this day.

TURTLE

1753: London, England

The *Gentleman's Magazine* of this date reported on the cooking of a very large turtle: "A turtle, weighing 350 lb., was ate at the King's Arms tavern, Pall Mall; the mouth of the oven was taken down to admit the part to be baked."

A nineteenth-century writer who commented on this event wrote of the turtle in his own time: "One does not look nowadays for turtles in Belgravian hotels, but at the London Tavern or the Mansion House, and associate it as a thing of course with civic banquets and aldermanic paunches."

It is difficult to underestimate the importance of the turtle at civic and other important banquets at this time and for the following century. They were imported in vast numbers from the West Indies in ships especially fitted out for the purpose with huge on-board tanks.

THE TAVERN ON THE GREEN

1976: New York

The famous New York dining venue the Tavern on the Green re-opened on this day. Six hundred invited guests attended the opening luncheon and enjoyed a fine buffet of dishes such as chilled salmon, turkey in aspic, and lamb stew.

Outside the restaurant, three bikini-clad models served samples of the world's largest ice cream sundae to the mayor and members of the public. The 12-foot high monster treat was made from 1,500 gallons of vanilla, chocolate, and strawberry ice cream, 150 pounds of chocolate topping, 50 pounds of strawberries, 50 pounds of almonds, and 25 pounds of maraschino cherries (the latter thrown onto it by half a dozen technicians wearing white jumpsuits). The mayor was prominent in the celebrations: he used a sword to cut into a 16-foot long cake decorated to represent the area around Central Park. He also drank a toast poured from a *salmanazar*, a huge champagne bottle holding 312 ounces

(about 9 liters).

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia.

It rained the whole day; in consequence of which I gave my cattle a rest. . . . We erected our tents for the first time since Mr. Gilbert's death; using tarpaulings and blankets for the purpose. Our shots amused themselves by shooting Blue Mountainers for the pot; and a strange mess was made of cockatoo, Blue Mountainers, an eagle hawk, and dried emu. I served out our last gelatine for Sunday luncheon; it was as good as when we started: the heat had, however, frequently softened it, and made it stick to the bag and to the things with which it was covered.

1874: Australia

Ernest Giles was on his second expedition into the center of Australia. He had left his companion, Gibson, and gone in search of water. He had arrived at Circus Water on the 30th, and on the 31st heard the sounds of a dying baby wallaby. He wrote: "I pounced on it and ate it, living, raw, dying—fur, skin, bones, skull, and all."

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1661: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys: "[A]nd after that to Bartlemew (Bartholemew) Fair. . . . There met with my ladies Jemima and Paulina, with Mr. Pickering and Medemoiselle (the governess). . . . Mr. Pickering bought them some fairings, and I did give every of them a bauble."

Fairings: These were presents or gifts of any kind purchased at a fair, but the term was particularly applied to thin cakes of gingerbread. (See August 24 on the Bartholomew Fair.)

September

September 1

SAINT GILES'S DAY

Saint Giles's Church in London was on the route between Newgate prison and the gallows at Tyburn. For several centuries it was the custom for prisoners passing the church on their way to execution to be given a drink of ale, called a Saint Giles's Bowl, "thereof to drink at their pleasure, as their last refreshing in this life."

A popular song of the time included the refrain: "For nothing the transit to Tyburn beguiles / So well as a draught from the Bowl of Saint Giles!"

A TELEVISION CHEF

1947: Britain

Philip Harben (1906–1970) appeared in his own television program on this day, and quickly became the first English television celebrity chef. Called simply *Cookery*, it was the first regular televised cookery show, and ran until 1951. Harben had to use his own post-war rations in the recipes, and on one occasion—the program was filmed and relayed live—he cracked an egg that was so bad he had to abandon the demonstration while he and the entire crew dissolved into laughter.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1860: USA

The *Scientific American* magazine published on this day commented on the "Improved Potato Digger" recently patented by John Rawdon of Freehold, New Jersey, saying: "The perfect simplicity and efficiency of this implement seems to place it beyond the reach of improvement, unless someone can invent an

attachment which will pick up the potatoes and deposit them in a basket.”

1908: USA

Johann Freidrick Meyer, Ludwig Cornelius, and Karl Wimmer, of Bremen, Germany, were granted Patent No. 897,840 for a “Preparation of Coffee.” The invention had as its object “to deprive coffee beans of caffeine, without destroying their other valuable properties,” and was the first U.S. patent granted for a method to produce decaffeinated coffee. The patent specifications acknowledged:

Numerous attempts made for this purpose have been unsuccessful, and especially the treatment of the beans with volatile solvents for caffeine has produced unsatisfactory results. The reason for failure seems to have been in the cellular tissue or organic structure of the coffee beans, which renders a sufficient penetration of the solvent almost impossible.

Decaffeination of the beans was achieved, in summary, thus:

[T]he coffee beans are first subjected to a preliminary treatment which causes the beans to swell and loosens the structure or cellular tissue of the same, preferably by exposing them to dry steam of about 1-2 atmospheres in a closed receptacle. Subsequently gases or vapors having an acid or alkaline reaction are introduced into the apparatus, in order to decompose the salts of caffeine.

Ammonia, sulfurous acid, hydro-chloric acid and similar chemicals have been found specially suitable for this purpose. The caffeine liberated by this treatment can be extracted more easily than its salts, and in case minute quantities of caffeine have remained in the beans after the extraction, they are volatilized by the subsequent roasting, because at the temperature of roasting coffee, caffeine in its free state is capable of sublimation, although this is not the case with its salts.

The beans treated as described are extracted with a solvent of caffeine, preferably one which dissolves only the latter, but as little as possible of the other constituents of the beans. We have found that benzene (also called benzol) is eminently suitable for this purpose, because an extract made with it leaves on evaporation almost pure caffeine.

NAVY & SPIRITS

1862: USA

The U.S. Navy abolished the use of spirituous liquor on this day. Beer and wine continued to be allowed, although the regulations changed again on July 1, 1914, under legislation promoted by Secretary of State Josephus Daniels.

FOOD & WAR

1918: USA, WW I

The U.S. Food Administration published a bulletin on *Sweets without Sugar*.

From a biochemical and nutritional point of view, the sweets contained plenty of sugar in the form of honey, corn syrup, molasses, *etc.* The object of the campaign, however, was to reduce consumption of refined white sugar, which was wasteful of resources. There were recipes for honey cake, brownies (made with molasses, but not chocolate), gingerbread, and a number of other cookies, cakes, sauces, puddings, conserves, and confectionary in the bulleting. The recipes also specified partial substitution of wheat flour, in order to comply with the other major food-conservation goal of the war.

Devil's Food Cake

Corn Syrup, 1/2 cup	Wheat flour, 1 cup
Honey, 1/2 cup	Barley flour, 2/3 cup
Chocolate, 2 squares	Soda, 1/2 teaspoon
Fat, 1/4 cup	Baking powder, 1 teaspoon

Egg, 1

Milk, 1/2 cup

Salt, 1/2 teaspoon

Beat together the honey, syrup and chocolate, until the chocolate is melted. Add fat, and stir until blended. Add egg, well beaten. Sift together the dry ingredients. Add alternately with milk to the first mixture. Stir well. Bake in well-greased layer cake pans in a moderate oven for about thirty minutes. Yield: 2 layers.

Carrot Marmalade.

Carrots, 1 ½ lbs. (5 ½ cups, chopped)

Salt, ½ teaspoon

Lemons, 3

syrup, white, 4 1/2 cups

Oranges, 2

Wash and scrub carrots, blanch in wire basket in boiling water for 4 to 5 minutes, cold dip, scrape, and cut into small pieces. Place in double boiler, add lemon juice and salt and cook for an hour. Add finely cut rind from oranges, the orange pulp and syrup; boil slowly until thick. Pour into hot glasses, partially seal and sterilize 10 minutes. Tighten seal. Let cool. Label and store. Yield: 14 glasses.

MOVIES & FOOD

1973

The movie *La Grande Bouffe* (*The Big Feast*) opened in Sweden on this day. The controversial film was directed by Marco Ferreri, and is about four apparently successful but bored middle-aged men who form a suicide pact and set about eating themselves to death.

EATEN TO EXTINCTION

1914: USA

The last passenger pigeon in the world died on this day in the Cincinnati Zoo. Her name was Martha. Passenger pigeons were once the most abundant bird species on Earth, and their numbers were greater than that of all North American birds combined. Sadly for the birds, they made fine eating, and there were no hunting restrictions whatsoever. In the early nineteenth century, flocks of passenger pigeons over a mile wide darkened the skies and took several hours to pass by, and they were so dense that the birds could be clubbed down from the air. They were even easier targets when they were nesting. One of the last remaining nesting colonies was in Wisconsin. In 1871, the colony was seventy-five miles long and up to fifteen miles wide, and had an estimated population of 136 million birds. Within two months, the colony had been wiped out. By the turn of the century, there were no passenger pigeons left in the wild.

IRISH TURKEYS

1946: Britain

The minister for agriculture responded to a question in Parliament on the price of Irish turkeys in Britain:

In an Order made by the British Minister of Food increased prices were prescribed for turkeys as from 1st September, 1946. There was no differentiation in the Order between home-produced and imported birds and consequently the increased prices applied to imports from this country. In a letter dated 23rd October, addressed to the High Commissioner, London, the Ministry of Food stated that it was decided to have a differential price between home-produced and imported birds; that this was to be effected by reducing the price for imported birds and that the imported price was to apply to our turkeys. This was the first official intimation received of the proposed reduction in our price. Appropriate representations have been made to the Minister of Food on various grounds including the superior quality of our turkeys but, so far, these representations have not proved effective.

FOOD & WAR

1915: Turkey, World War I

Lieutenant A. E. Whitear, DCM, writing of the Gallipoli campaign, said:

We were camped at Fisherman Huts, these were situated between ANZAC and Suvla Bay. Our rations consisted of Bully Beef and Biscuits, both of these items of diet became more useful later in the War in France, the Bully Beef made excellent Roads and the Biscuits made excellent fires.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1586: Greenland

From *The Second Voyage Attempted by Master John Davis, with others, for the discovery of the NorthWest Passage, in Anno 1586*. In the journal entry for the day, the writer notes the diet of the indigenous people:

The 1st of September at ten o'clock we set sail, and coasted the shore with very fair weather. The third day being calm, at noon we struck sail, and let fall a cadge anchor to prove whether we could take any fish, being in latitude 54 degrees 30 minutes, in which place we found great abundance of cod, so that the hook was no sooner overboard but presently a fish was taken. It was the largest and best refet fish that ever I saw, and divers fishermen that were with me said that they never saw a more suaule, or better skull of fish in their lives, yet had they seen great abundance.

Refet has two meanings which could apply here. It can refer to fish offal, but it can also mean “nourished, or fattened”—which is likely what is meant here.

1836: USA

From missionary Narcissa Whitman’s journal of her journey in 1836 from New York, across the Rocky Mountains, to Oregon and beyond. They arrived at their destination—Walla Walla—on this day.

You can better imagine our feelings this morning than we can describe
them. I could not realize that the end of our long journey was so near.

them. I could not realize that the end of our long journey was so near. We arose as soon as it was light, took a cup of coffee, ate of the duck we had given us last night and dressed for Walla Walla. We started while it was yet early, for all were in haste to reach the desired haven.

. . . Having arranged our things we were soon called to a feast of melons; the first, I think, I ever saw or tasted. The muskmelon was the largest, measuring eighteen in length, fifteen around the small end and nineteen around the large end. You may be assured that none of us were satisfied or willing to leave the table until we had filled our plates with chips.

At four o'clock we were called to dine. It consisted of pork, cabbage, turnips, tea, bread and butter; by favorite dishes, and much like the last dinner I ate with Mother Loomis. I am thus particular in my description of eatables so that you may be assured that we find something to eat beyond the Rocky mountains as well as at home. We find plenty of salt, but many here prefer to do almost, and some entirely without it, on their meats and vegetables.

MEAD

1663: England

In *The Closet of the Eminently Learned Sir Kenlem Digby, Knight, Opened* (1669), Digby gives a recipe for "Meathe" (Mead), demonstrated to him on this day.

The first of Septemb. 1663. Mr. Webb came to my House to make some for Me. He took fourty three Gallons of water, and fourty two pounds of Norfolk honey. As soon as the water boiled, He put into it a slight handful of Hops; which after it had boiled a little above a quarter of an hour, he skimmed off; then put in the honey to the boyling water, and presently a white scum rose, which he skimmed off still as it rose; which skimming was ended in little above a quarter of an hour more. Then he put in his herbs and spices, which were these: Rose-mary, Thyme, Winter-savory, Sweet-marjoram, Sweet-bryar-leaves, seven or eight little Parsley-roots: There was most of the Savoury, and least of the Eglantine, three Ounces of Ginger, one Ounce and a half of Cinnamon, five Nutmegs (half an Ounce of Cloves he would have added, but did not). And these boiled an hour and a quarter longer in all from the first beginning to boile, some that less than two hours.

longer; in all from the first beginning to doon, somewhat less then two hours: Then he presently laded it out of the Copper into Coolers, letting it run through a Hair-sieve: And set the Coolers shelving (tilted up) that the Liquor might afterwards run the more quietly out of them. After the Liquor had stood so about two hours, he poured or laded out of some of the Coolers very gently, that the dregs might not rise, into other Coolers. And about a pint of very thick dregs remained last in the bottom of every Cooler. That which ran out, was very clear: After two hours more settling, (in a shelving situation), He poured it out again into other Coolers; and then very little dregs (or scarce any in some of the Coolers) did remain. When the Liquor was even almost cold, He took the yolks of three New-laid-eggs, a spoonful of fine white flower, and about half a pint of new fresh barm of good strong Beer (you must have care that your barm be very white and clean, not sullied and foul, as is usual among slovenly Brewers in London). Beat this very well together, with a little of the Liquor in a skimming dish, till you see it well incorporated, and that it beginneth to work. Then put it to a pailful (of about two Gallons and a half) of the Liquor, and mingle it well therewith. Then leave the skimming dish reversed floating in the middle of the Liquor, and so the yest will work up into and under the hollow of the dish, and grow out round about the sides without. He left this well and thick covered all night, from about eleven a clock at night; And the next morning, finding it had wrought very well, He mingled what was in the Pail with the whole proportion of the Liquor, and so Tunned it up into a Sack-cask. I am not satisfied, whether he did not put a spoonful of fine white good Mustard into his Barm, before he brought it hither, (for he took a pretext to look out some pure clean white barm) but he protested, there was nothing mingled with the barm, yet I am in doubt. He confessed to me that in making of Sider, He put's in half as much Mustard as Barm; but never in Meathe. The fourth of September in the morning, he Bottled up into Quart-bottles the two lesser Rundlets of this Meathe (for he did Tun the whole quantity into one large Rundlet, and two little ones) whereof the one contained thirty Bottles; and the other, twenty two. There remained but little settling or dregs in the Bottom's of the Barrels, but some there was. The Bottles were set into a cool Cellar, and He said they would be ready to drink in three weeks. The Proportion of Herbs and Spices is this; That there be so much as to drown the luscious sweetness of the Honey; but not so much as to taste of herbs or spice, when you drink the Meathe. But that the sweetnes of the honey may kill their taste: And so the Meathe have a pleasant taste, but not of herbs, nor spice, nor honey. And therefore you put more or less according to the time you will drink it in. For a great deal will be mellowed

according to the time you will drink it in. For a great deal will be mellowed away in a year, that would be ungratefully strong in three months. And the honey that will make it keep a year or two, will require a triple proportion of spice and herbs. He commends Parsley roots to be in greatest quantity, boiled whole, if young; but quartered and pithed, if great and old.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1763: France

From the narrative of Tobias Smollett's *Travels through France and Italy*.

Living here is pretty reasonable; and the markets are tolerably supplied. The beef is neither fat nor firm; but very good for soup, which is the only use the French make of it. The veal is not so white, nor so well fed, as the English veal; but it is more juicy, and better tasted. The mutton and pork are very good. We buy our poultry alive, and fatten them at home. Here are excellent turkeys, and no want of game: the hares, in particular, are very large, juicy, and high-flavoured. . . . The French inhabitants drink no good wine; nor is there any to be had. . . . The place is well supplied with strawberries, cherries, gooseberries, corinths, peaches, apricots, and excellent pears. I have eaten more fruit this season, than I have done for several years.

1760: Italy

Christopher Hervey was visiting Tuscany, and later wrote a narrative of his experiences in *Letters from Portugal, Spain, Italy and Germany in the Years 1759, 1760, 1761*. On this day he noted the value of the chestnuts in the region.

Lucca baths: The immense forests of chestnuts, with which many of these hills are crowned, struck my imagination as a blessing of Heaven upon the poor. It is not possible for any person to starve in these countries, if there is a good chesnut season. The peasants gather them up in sacks, and not only make use of them for present consumption, but after they are dry grind them into a flower [flour], of which they make bread. I cannot say it is palatable, but, I believe, very nourishing, and custom may have inured the feeders upon it to its *mawkish* taste. To look at the men, they seem very hale and lusty.

1773: Scotland

From James Boswell's *The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson*.

At Auchnasheal, we sat down on a green turf-seat at the end of a house; they brought us out two wooden dishes of milk, which we tasted. One of them was frothed like a syllabub. I saw a woman preparing it with a stick as is used for chocolate, and in the same manner. We had a considerable circle about us, men, women, and children. . . . I also gave each person a bit of wheat bread, which they had never tasted before. . . . We Came onto the inn at Glenelg. . . . This inn was furnished with not a single article that we could either eat or drink; but Mr. Murchison, factor to the Laird of Macleod in Glenelg, sent us a bottle of rum and some sugar.

September 2

AN ALASKAN LUNCHEON

1911: Alaska

Walter L. Fisher, secretary of the interior of the United States, was honored at a luncheon on a Cabinet Special run on the White Pass & Yukon Route from Skaguay (Skagway), Alaska, to Whitehorse, Yukon, on this day. The menu was printed on leather:

Crab Meat Cocktail a la Alaska

Bisque of Tomatoes

Alaska Onions Celery Radishes

—

Alaska Greyling

Native Cucumber Salad

Breast of Grouse

Alaska White Currant Jelly

New Alaska Potatoes in Cream Skaguay Peas

Lettuce Salad Alaskan

Alaska Strawberries Raspberries

Skaguay Jersey Cream

Cakes

Cheese Café Noir Crackers

PROHIBITION

1922: USA

Henry Ford posted notices around his automobile factory in Detroit on this day in support of Prohibition. The notice reminded that “The 18th Amendment is part of the fundamental laws of this country. It was meant to be enforced” and threatened penalties for any worker with “the odor of beer, wine or liquor on his breath, or (who) possessed any intoxicants on his person or in his home.”

AN AUSSIE BARBECUE

1920: Sydney

One of the earliest mentions of a barbecue in Australia occurred in relation to fund-raising activities in Sydney on this day. There was a serious shortfall in the money raised to fulfill the state of New South Wales’s quota for the Second Peace Loan. On September 2, the ladies’ committee made their appeal in Moore-street, and to encourage attendance and support, “the novel ceremony of a barbecue” was planned. A barbecue dinner for the Master Dutchmen’s Association

dardecue was planned. A bullock given by the Master Butchers Association was to be roasted in one-piece, and all subscribers of £10 were to receive a meal of roast beef. The cooking fire was to be set in one of the sand drays of the City Council, and the meal was expected to be ready at 1 o'clock.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1667: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

This day is kept in the City as a public fast for the fire this day twelvemonth. . . . In discourse at dinner concerning the change of men's humours and fashions touching meats Mr. Ashburnham told us that he remembers since the only fruit in request, and eaten by the King and Queen at table as the best fruit, was the Katharine payre [pear] though they knew at that time other fruits of France and out our own country.

Pepys in his first sentence is referring to the first anniversary of the Great Fire of London, and the order for a national fast as an act of atonement and appeasement.

1726: At Sea

Benjamin Franklin kept a journal of his voyage to Philadelphia (from England) aboard the *Berkshire*: "This morning the wind changed; a little fair. We caught a couple of dolphins, and fried them for dinner. They eat indifferent well."

1741: Britain

William Stukely visited Sir Robert Walpole on this day, and had the opportunity to try a rare treat in England—the exotic, imported pineapple. "I visited Sir R Walpole at Houghton, we eat a pine apple, a most delicious mixture of a pomegranate, a melon, a qince and most other fine fruits."

1764: France

Tobias Smollett was in Nice during his *Travels through France and Italy*. He

mentions the way of eating beccaficas and other small birds.

Beccaficas are smaller than sparrows, but very fat, and they are generally eaten half raw. The best way of dressing them is to stuff them into a roll, scooped of it's crum; to baste them well with butter, and roast them, until they are brown and crisp. The ortolans are kept in cages, and crammed, until they die of fat, then eaten as dainties. The thrush is presented with the trail [i.e., the innards], because the bird feeds on olives.

September 3

DENBY DALE PIES

2000: England, the Millenium Pie

The people of the village of Denby Dale in Yorkshire baked their tenth giant pie in a tradition over two hundred years old, this time to celebrate the new millennium. The Millenium pie was forty feet long, two feet wide, three feet deep, weighed over thirteen tons, and was enjoyed by 22,000 people. The previous pies were:

1788: Pie No. 1

It is said that the villagers of Denby Dale in the county of Yorkshire made a giant pie to celebrate the recovery of King George III from one of the bouts of madness caused (it is now believed) by the inherited metabolic disease called porphyria. The pie was most likely baked in one of the beehive kilns used for making large pipes.

1815: Pie No. 2, the Victory Pie

This pie was made to celebrate the Duke of Wellington's victory over Napoleon at Waterloo, and thus the end of the war with France. This pie contained two sheep and twenty fowl, required half a peck of flour in its crust, and was baked in a specially built oven.

1846: Pie No. 3

The pie was made to celebrate the repeal of the hated Corn Laws. This pie was 21.6 feet in circumference and 22 inches deep, and contained 624 pounds of flour, 9.6 pounds of lard, 16 pounds of butter, 7 hares, 14 rabbits, 2 brace pheasant, 2 brace partridges, 2 brace grouse, 2 geese, 2 ducks, 2 turkeys, 2 guinea fowls, 4 hens, 6 pigeons, 63 small birds, 5 sheep, 1 calf, and 100 pounds of beef. Unfortunately, the platform holding the pie gave way under the general pushing and shoving of fifteen hundred eager crowd members, and the pie became a broken mess.

1887: Pie No. 4, the Jubilee Pie

A special oven was again built to make a pie to celebrate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. This pie was made by professional bakers. It was eight feet in diameter, two feet deep, weighed nearly two tons, and cost £250. The pastry required 900 pounds of flour and the filling contained 934 pounds of beef, 160 pounds of veal, 142 pounds lamb, 44 fowls, 49 pigeons, 6 braise of grouse, 8 ducks, a turkey, 6 geese, a dove, 102 small birds, 20 pounds of suet, 580 pounds of potatoes, 309 pounds of pork, 100 pounds of lard, 50 pounds of butter, 45 rabbits, and 3 hares. It was, however, a disaster. The contents were found to be decomposing, and the stench dreadful. It was buried, without honors, in a pit filled with quicklime.

1887: Pie No. 5, the Resurrection Pie

This pie was baked on September 3, a week after the disaster that was the Jubilee pie. The citizens of the village, being embarrassed by the stinking mess that was pie no. 4, decided that they were going to do it right. The ladies of the village therefore took over—no professionals this time. This pie was not so large as the previous, being made up of a mere 672 pounds of flour, 1,340 pounds of potatoes, 2 calves, 2 sheep, and a single heifer. It was, however, a resounding success, and the villagers felt vindicated.

1896: Pie No. 6

It seems that after nine years, the villagers were looking for an excuse to make another pie, and it was decided to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the repeal of the Corn Laws. A new dish, ten feet long by six feet, six inches wide, and one foot deep, was made. The pie and dish weighed one and three quarter tons, and

was pulled to Norman Park in Denby Dale by a team of fourteen horses.

An estimated crowd of one hundred thousand people visited Denby Dale that day, resulting in every single ticket in Huddersfield train station being sold. The day was successful with concerts and a firework display.

1928: Pie No. 7

It proved impossible to make a pie to celebrate the end of World War I as the villagers would have liked, due to the complex post-war social and economic situation. By 1928 however, it was decided to make a pie to raise money for the Huddersfield Royal Infirmary. On August 26, after thirty hours cooking, the pie was ready and was placed on the back of a truck and accompanied by decorated floats and all of the other ingredients of a parade, and taken to Norman Park for distribution.

1964: Pie No. 8

The folk of Denby Dale badly wanted to bake a pie for the end of World War II, and then for Queen Elizabeth's coronation in 1953, but their hopes were dashed because rationing was still in force, and no dispensation was allowed even for such a noble idea. It seemed briefly that the Coronation Pie would go ahead when Australian producers offered to provide 1,400 pounds of beef, but unfortunately the offer was not received in sufficient time for the pie to be made.

On September 5, 1964, another pie was finally made, the excuse being that it was to celebrate the four royal births that had by that time occurred.

1988: Pie No. 9, the Bicentenary Pie

Two hundred years after the first pie was made, the villagers planned one that would break a world record. This one weighed ten tons and was indeed recorded in the Guinness Book of Records.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1772: At Sea

Captain Cook on his second voyage, in the *Resolution*, left Madeira on September 2, 1772. The German naturalist Johann Forster and his son George were aboard for the duration of the voyage, and Forster wrote in his diary on this day: “Several Shoals of flying fish were seen & a Bonito (*Scomber Pelamys*) was caught my Son finished a drawing of it & we feasted upon the Fish, which in my opinion is a very dry Fish, & not so palatable as it is generally represented.”

1805: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day John Ordway wrote:

[W]ent up and down rough rocky mountains all day. Some places so steep and rocky that some of the horses fell backwards and roled to the bottom. One horse was near being killed . . . eat the last of our pork & C. some of the men threaten to kill a colt to eat they being hungry, but puts it off untill tomorrow noon hoping the hunters will kill Some game . . . so we lay down wet hungry and cold came with much fatigue 11 miles this day.

1819: USA

Alonzo Delano (1809–1874) traveled overland to California in 1849–1851.

[W]e were still two hundred and fifty miles from the mines, and at least two hundred from the nearest settlement. This was a damper, when we expected that we were within one day’s travel, at most, from Lawson’s. We still had hard bread enough, but there was a tremendous cry within for flesh, flesh, flesh! Distance, fifteen miles

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1666: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys. The great fire of London was still raging, and he had sent away much of his household stuff to save it from the fire:

At night, lay down upon a quilt of W. Hewer in the office (all my own things being packed up or gone); and after me, my poor wife did the like

things being packed up or gone); and after me, my poor wife and the like—we having fed upon the remains of yesterday’s dinner, having no fire nor dishes, nor any opportunity of dressing anything.

September 4

RESTAURANTS & HOTELS

1885: New York

The Exchange Buffet, the world’s first self-service restaurant, opened in New York opposite the Stock Exchange. Only male customers were allowed, and there was no seating—all meals were taken standing up. The restaurant operated on the honor system; customers helped themselves from the buffet, then told the cashier what they had taken.

FOOD BUSINESS

1858

The *Scientific American* (vol. 13, no. 52) gave information about a Long Island company employed in the making of cornstarch. A recipe for a cake using the “Maizena” brand cornstarch was included in the article.

Starch Manufacture.

The great consumption of this article in which every civilized country indulges, as enabling the community to keep that virtue which is next to godliness has rendered it necessary, from time to time, to improve its manufacture in many ways. A large factory for the production of starch was some time ago started at the pleasant village of Glen Cove, on Long Island Sound. . . . Starch is a beautifully white pulverent substance existing in all grains, fruits, seeds and esculent roots. . . . In Europe much is made from rice, but here the best white corn is used. . . . The Glen Cove Starch Company, determined to lose nothing, sell the gluten for food for horses, cattle and pigs, to which purpose it is excellently adapted, being far better, and we should think as cheap as swill. They also make an article of food, in the form of a cake, which we tasted, and have no hesitation in pronouncing it ~~it is called Maizena and the following recipe will inform you how to~~

it superb; it is called maizena, and the following recipe will inform our lady readers how it is to be used:

Maizena	Half Pound.
Sugar	Two Cups.
Butter	Half Cup.
Eggs	Three.
Cream Tartar	1/2 Teaspoonful.
Soda	1/4 Teaspoonful. Dissolved in one-third of a tea cup of milk.

Mix thoroughly, place in patty-pans, and bake immediately in a quick oven, from ten to fifteen minutes. The cake improves by age, if kept in a dry place.

1877: USA

The Quaker Mill Company registered the trademark “Quaker Man” for their cereal products. According to the company, the name was chosen when Quaker Mill partner Henry Seymour found an encyclopedia article on the Quakers and decided that the qualities described—integrity, honesty, purity—provided an appropriate identity for his company’s oat product. It was the first trademark registered for a breakfast cereal.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1492: Canary Islands

Christopher Columbus on his first voyage had arrived at La Gomera on September 2, and immediately began replenishing his ships' supplies. He anticipated a three-week voyage, but provisioned for four. On September 3, dried meat and salted fish were added to the supplies of salt, wine, molasses, and honey already stored. Some fresh fruit was also taken aboard, for immediate consumption as it would not keep. More provisions, including quantities of ships' biscuits, were loaded the following two days. Their next landfall was the Hispaniola (now Haiti and the Dominican Republic), which they reached on October 2.

1609: America

Henry Hudson entered the river which would subsequently bear his name on September 3. The following day his crewmate Robert Juet noted in his journal:

In the morning as soon as the day was light, we saw that it was good riding farther up. So we sent our boat to sound, and found that it was a very good harbour; and four and five fathoms, two cables length from the shore. Then we weighed and went in with our ship. Then our boat went on land with our net to fish, and caught ten great mullets, of a foot and a half long a piece and a ray as great as four men could haul into the ship. . . . This day the people of the country came aboard of us, seeming very glad of our coming, and brought green tobacco, and gave us of it for knives and beads. They go in deer skins loose, well dressed. They have yellow copper. They desire clothes, and are very civil. They have great store of maize or Indian wheat, whereof they made good bread. The country is full of great and tall oaks.

1770

New Guinea. From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks.

New Guinea; Passing Arow. The altered Countenances of our common people were still more perceivable than they were yesterday. Two thirds allowance had I beleive made the cheif difference with them, for our

provisions were now so much wasted by keeping that that allowance was little more than was necessary to keep life and soul together.

1805: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day Patrick Gass wrote:

A considerable quantity of snow fell last night. . . . After eating a few grains of parched corn, we set out at 8 o'clock. . . . We killed some pheasants on our way, and were about to make use of the last of our flour, when, to our great joy, one of our hunters killed a fine deer.

And on this day Joseph Whitehouse also noted: “[T]owards evening we arrived at a large Encampment of the flat head . . . the natives . . . have no meat at this time but gave us abundance of their dried fruit Such as Servis berrys cherries different kinds of roots all of which eat verry well.”

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt’s journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia.

At early dawn, a flight of wild geese filed in long line over our camp, the flapping of their wings was heavy, but short, and the note they emitted resembled that of the common goose, but was somewhat shriller. In the box-flat we started a flock of emus, and Spring caught a fine male bird. It would have been highly amusing for a looker on to observe how remarkably eager we were to pluck the feathers from its rump, and cut the skin, to see how thick the fat was, and whether it was a rich yellow, or only flesh-coloured. We had, indeed, a most extraordinary desire for anything fat; and we soon found where to look for it. In the emu it accumulates all over the skin, but particularly on the rump, and between the shoulders, and round the sternal plate. To obtain the oil, we skinned those parts, and suspended them before a slow fire, and caught the oil in our frying pan; this was of a light yellowish colour, tasteless, and almost free from scent. Several times, when suffering from excessive fatigue, I rubbed it into the skin all over the body, and its slightly exciting properties proved very

beneficial. It has always been considered by the white inhabitants of the bush, a good anti-rheumatic.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1666: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys. The great fire of London is still burning, and people are trying to save their goods from the flames. Pepys digs a pit and puts his wine and parmesan cheese in it.

And in the evening Sir W. Penn and I did dig another (*pit*) and put our wine in it, and I my parmazan cheese as well as my wine and some other things. . . Mrs. Turner . . . and her husband supped with my wife and I at night in the office, upon a shoulder of mutton from the cook's, without any napkin or anything, in a sad manner but were merry.

September 5

THE BREWER'S COMPANY DINNER

1419: London

The Livery Companies of London routinely sat down to a fine dinner after their annual Election Day business was completed. The expenses of the Brewers' Company dinner on this day provide a great insight into the meal.

	£	s	d
First, for 2 necks of mutton, 3 breasts, 12 marrowbones, with portorage of a quarter of coals	2	5	
Divers spicery	2	4	

6 swans	15 0
12 Conies	3 0
200 Eggs	1 6
2 gallons of frumenty	0 4
2 gallons of cream	0 8
Hire of 2 dozen of earthen pots	0 4
Hire of 2 dozen of white cups	1 4
1 quart of honey, with a new pot	0 4
Porterage of water by the water-bearers	0 4
1 pottel of fresh grease	0 8
4 dozen pigeons	4 4
11 gallons of red wine	9 2
4 gallons of milk	0 4
White bread	2 0

Trencher bread	0 3
Payn cakes	0 6
Half a bushel of flour	0 7
I kilderkin of good ale	2 4
Given to the minstrels	1 4
To John Hardy, cook, for him and his servants	3 4
To William Devenyhshe, panter	0 6
1 quart of vinegar	0 1
Packthread	0 1
Hire of 2 dozen of pewter vessels	1 2
Salt	0 1
Washing of the napery	0 4
Total	2 15 3

KLONDIKE BEEF

1896: Yukon

A few weeks after the gold rush started in the Klondike, the first beef steak to reach Circle City fetched, by some accounts, \$48 per pound, the highest known ever paid for beef. William Haskell mentioned the incident in *Two Years in the Klondike and Alaskan Goldfields*, published in 1898.

The only fresh beef that I ever heard of in Circle City was brought over the summit and killed at Forty Mile, and a piece weighing ten and a half pounds was brought down and raffled off for the benefit of the Circle City Hospital. In this way the piece sold at the rate of nineteen dollars and twenty-seven cents per pound. Moose, bear, caribou, and mountain sheep furnish the only fresh meat to be obtained, and as a rule they must be hunted. Everyone was too busy for sport then, so at times such meat was very scarce. It readily brought twenty-five cents per pound, and sometimes much higher.

This beef was from the first cattle drive in the Yukon. Forty head of cattle were driven two hundred and fifty miles over the Dalton trail to Forty Mile. For the last stretch of the journey the cattle were floated downriver on rafts. Gold had just been discovered in August, and the camps were frantic with excitement and activity.

Everyone turned out to look at this marvellous piece of beef, and everyone wanted a piece of it. Bids were started at \$3 per pound and they rose rapidly to \$35 per pound. The atmosphere must have been getting a little tense and the crowd a little excitable, because it was then decided to sell tickets for the privilege of drawing for a slice of the meat. When \$480 worth of tickets had been sold, the drawing started, and, to the relief of those in charge of the sale, hardly any trouble resulted.

FOOD WRITING

1936: USA

George Rector wrote a regular food column for the *Saturday Evening Post*. On

this day his article was entitled “Salad Daze,” and Rector wrote it with his tongue firmly in his cheek. The words of this well-respected gourmet and writer were, however, taken at face value, and his new way of mixing a salad became the only way. Rector’s advice was that the secret of a perfect salad was to rub the inside of a wooden salad bowl with a clove of garlic before adding the salad ingredients and dressing, this being the only way to get just the right amount of garlic flavor. Furthermore, he insisted that the bowl never be washed, but merely wiped out after use, saying: “Wood, you see, is absorbent, and after you’ve been rubbing your bowl with garlic and anointing it with oil for some years, it will have acquired the patina of a Corinthian bronze and the personality of a 100-year-old brandy.”

No such thing happened, of course. For many decades, in spite of their salad bowls never acquiring any personality at all, but steadily becoming tackier and smellier, cooks in America continued to make their salads this “perfect” way. It took a long time and some hard insistence on the part of a few dedicated food writers before common sense and aesthetics prevailed, and the hoax method was abandoned.

Rector may have made some mileage out of the garlic-rubbed bowl idea, but he did not invent it himself. Mrs. Sarah Tyson Rorer, director of the Philadelphia Cooking School and prolific cookbook writer, suggested it more than two decades earlier (perhaps she got idea elsewhere too). She gives the method in her book *New salads for dinners, luncheons, suppers and receptions*, published in 1897, and also uses it in *Sandwiches*, published in 1912.

Swedish Sandwiches

Flake any cold cooked fish, dust it with salt, pepper and lemon juice. Rub the bottom of a bowl with a clove of garlic, add a half cupful of mayonnaise, four finely chopped gherkins, twelve chopped olives and two tablespoonfuls of capers. Mix and stir in two tablespoonfuls of finely chopped parsley. Spread a thin layer of this dressing over a plain slice of bread, do not butter the bread, cover it with fish, put on top a crisp lettuce leaf, then cover with another slice of bread that has been spread with the dressing. Press, trim the crusts and cut into fingers.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

1372: London, Punishment of the Thewe, for Selling Putrid Soles

An extract from the early archives of the City of London describes the public punishment and humiliation ordered on this day, for the offense of selling rotten fish. In medieval times, calendar dates were commonly recorded in relation to the nearest religious observance. In 1372, Saint Giles's Day (September 1) was a Tuesday, so the "Saturday next after" was September 5.

On Saturday next after the Feast of St. Giles the Abbot in the reign of King Edward the third, Margery Hore, *fishwyfe*, was brought here, before the Mayor and Aldermen, with certain fish called "soles," stinking and rotten, and wholesome for the use of man, which she had exposed for sale at the Stokkes on the day aforesaid, in deceit of the common peopel, and against the Ordinance published thereon, and to the scandal of the City, *etc.*

Which Margaret being questioned there upon, did not deny the same, *etc.* Therefore it was awarded that she should have the punishment of the pillory ordained for wome, called the *thewe*, for her fraud and deceit aforesaid; and that the said fish should there be burnt, *etc.* and the cause of her punishment be there proclaimed.

PROCLAMATIONS IN RESPECT OF BEEF

1552: England

The Court of Aldermen of the City of London made a proclamation fixing the price of butchers' meat.

The v day of September was a proclamasyon made that the bochers of London shuld selle beyffe and moton and velle, the best for 1d fardynge the lb., and nekes and legs at iij fardynge the lb., and the best lam the [quarter] viijd . and yff thay wyll nott thay to loysse ther freedom for ever and ever.

1747: England

King George II issued a proclamation on this day in response to the spread of a worrying "cattle distemper," with the order to be in force for three months.

The distemper having increased among the horned cattle. his Maiesty was

... the distemper having increased among the common cattle, his Majesty was pleased to issue his royal proclamation for prohibiting, throughout England, the removing of cattle from one town to another, except such as were fatted and fit for immediate slaughter. And for the greater certainty that he fatted cattle were not infected, no person was to buy, sell, or offer to sale, any such fatted cattle, without delivering a certificate, under the hand and seal of one or more justices of the peace for the country . . . that the said cattle, and the herd or herds out of which the same were taken, were at that time, and had been the space of two months before the date of such certificate, entirely free from the said distemper, and in the possession of the person selling the same . . . and all butchers, or others, who bought the said cattle, should cause them to be killed within the space of ten days from their being so bought.

SPARROWS VERSUS REED BIRDS

1883: USA

The Willimantic Chronicle discussed the substitution of the English Sparrow for the highly desirable Reed Bird at many New York Restaurants.

The disagreement as to whether the English sparrow is a blessing or a nuisance is of long standing, but promises now to be ended speedily, for some one has divulged the fact that most of the game served at New York restaurants as “reed birds” is really the sparrow of our city parks and streets. That settles it; if the sparrows are toothsome enough to pass for reed birds, there will soon be no sparrows to talk about. An enterprising Norwegian is said to have proved to some competent judges and edibles that portions of the flesh of the whale are good to eat. Some parts have the flavor of beef while others suggest chicken, and the most delightful fact of all is that the meat can be sold in cans at about half the price of Australian beef. As the whale is not a fish, but a warm blooded animal and a very large one, too, there may seem great promise in this discovery and it is not impossible that Yankee whalers may soon supply grocers’ shelves with canned whale. It is a curious fact, however, that sailors who have eaten whale after being away from port long enough to take keen delight in any fresh meat that is not absolutely detestable have never been known to speak enthusiastically about whale. Canned whale is not likely to take the conceit out of the Texas steer.

U.S. STATE FOOD

2001: Pennsylvania

The legislature designated the Nazareth Sugar Cookie (also known as the Amish Sugar Cookie) as the official cookie of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The cookie is baked in the shape of a keystone, the symbol of the state.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1832: Patagonia

From the journal of Syms Covington, assistant to Charles Darwin on the voyage of the *Beagle*.

[W]hence we sailed for the shallow Bay of Bahia, or the White Bay, on the Patagonian Coast where we arrived September 5th. Here you find immense numbers of deer, cavy, ostriches, and guanacos but of the latter, here, I never saw many, lions, tigers, foxes, armadillos and birds of various species, snakes and insects. The armadillo burrows in the ground, is very plentiful, and is most excellent eating, even equal to a young suckling pig. We found an ostrich nest with twenty seven eggs.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1664: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys, who notes an extreme food aversion in a colleague: “[A]nd so home to dinner, and thither came W. Bowyer and dined with us; but strange to see how he could not enure onyons in sauce to lamb, but was overcome with the sight of it and so was forced to make his dinner of an egge or two.”

1666: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys. The Great Fire of London was burning close to his house, so he had taken his wife and his gold, and left them safe at Woolwich. He expected his house to be gone when he returned. “I up to the top of Barkings

He expected his house to be gone when he returned. . . . I went up to the top of Barking steeple, and there saw the saddest sight of desolation that I ever saw. Everywhere great fires . . . and to Sir W. Penn's and here eat a piece of cold meat, having eaten nothing since Sunday but the remains of Sunday's dinner."

1687: England

King James II visited Oxford, where a fabulous collation was prepared for him in the library. No one but the king ate however, as protocol demanded that the king signal that everyone present could eat, which he did not do.

The antiquarian Anthony Wood was not at Oxford at the time of the visit of James II, but recorded the details as he heard them:

[The King] came up into the library between 10 and eleven, attended by the vicechancellor and Drs., besides severall of the lords. . . . He found a banquet already prepared for him at the south end of the library, with a seat of state at the south end of the table; none did eat but he, for he spake to nobody to eat.

September 6

IRISH POTATO FAMINE

1845: Ireland

The first report of the devastating potato blight to appear in the Irish press was in the *Dublin Evening Post* on this day.

We regret to learn that the blight of the potato crop, so much complained of in Belgium and several of the English counties has affected the crop, and that to a considerable extent, in our own immediate locality. . . . We are assured by a gentleman of vast experience that the injury sustained by potatoes from blight on his domain is very serious—that they are entirely unfit for use; and he suggests potatoes so injured should be immediately dug out for the use of the pigs.

The blight which completely destroyed potato crops across Europe and

precipitated the Irish Famine (“The Great Hunger”) of the 1840s was caused by a fungus-like organism called *Phytophthora infestans*. It was first reported in Philadelphia in 1843, quickly appeared in Europe, and reached Southern England in 1845.

ANNIVERSARY

1634: England

Thomas Tryon was born on this day near Cirencester. He received no formal education as a child, but taught himself to read and write. In his early twenties he became a Behemist (a follower of the German mystic theologian Jakob Böhme) and embarked on a personal crusade of asceticism. Although he became a hatter by trade, he is best known for his self-help-type books and as an early proponent of vegetarianism. It is said that he persuaded the young Benjamin Franklin to follow a vegetarian diet (which he did, for a time, until he noted one day that at big fish ate little fish and decided that as “God had sensibly included such sacrifices as part of his overall rational plan for the universe; who are we to deny ourselves what the rest of nature freely enjoys?”). Tryon embraced all of the ethical issue of his, and all of our, times. He was a pacifist and a temperance advocate, had an anti-slavery view, and was a passionate vegetarian.

One of his books had the full title of *Wisdom’s Dictates: or Aphorisms and Rules, Physical, Moral, and Divine; For Preserving the Health of the Body and the Peace of the Mind, fit to be regarded and practiced by all that would enjoy the Blessings of the present and future World. To which is added, A Bill of Fare of Seventy five Noble Dishes of Excellent Food, far exceeding those made of Fish or Flesh, which Banquet I present to the Sons of Wisdom, or such as shall decline that depraved Custom of Eating Flesh and Blood*. It was published in 1691. Many of the seventy-five noble dishes listed are essentially in the form of recipes.

53. There is also a brave sort of Food made of Wheat and Milk, called Furmity; some make it plain, and others add Fruit to it; the plain is the best, but they are both very good, affording a firm substantial nourishment, of a mild friendly operation: The frequent use of this is a grand enemy to the generation of sower windy Humours.

54. Boiled Wheat buttered is a noble Dish, and with this alone, a Man may

make a better and more satisfactory Meal, than with Princely variety; it affords a sweet, friendly, and most agreeable nourishment, easie of concoction, and generates fine thin Blood.

55. Take good white Pease, boil them, when near done, add green Sage and Onions cut small, then season it with Salt and Butter; but in the Winter, when green Sage is not good, then take that which is dried according to our Directions in the Way to Health, long Life and Happiness, which is to be preferred before green. This is a brave strong and substantial Pottage, very grateful to the Palate, and agreeable to the Stomach.

HOW TO COOK PEMMICAN

1874: Canada

Sam Steele joined the “Mounties” in 1873. He kept a journal and later wrote of his experiences in *Forty Years in Canada Reminiscences of the Great NorthWest*. At this time he wrote of pemmican:

Inspector Jarvis bought a supply of pemmican, which is the best food in the world for the traveller, soldier and sailor, either on the plains of America or in the Arctic regions. . . . It [the pemmican] was cooked in two ways in the west; one a stew of pemmican, water, flour and, if they could be secured, wild onions or preserved potatoes. This was called “rubaboo”; the other was called by the plain hunters a “rechaud.” It was cooked in a frying-pan with onions and potatoes or alone. Some persons ate pemmican raw, but I must say that I never had a taste for it that way.

Instructions on the basic preparation of pemmican were given in *The Market Assistant, Containing a Brief Description of Every Article of Human Food Sold in the Public Markets of the Cities of New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Brooklyn* (1867): “Pemmican . . . This is prepared by cutting the lean meat into thin slices, exposing it to the heat of the sun or fire, and, when dry, pounding it to a powder. It is then mixed with an equal weight of buffalo suet, and stuffed into bladders.”

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1811: USA

From the journal of Wilson Price Hunt's overland expedition in 1811–1812:

We camped near a brook that flowed north and emptied into the Big Horn River. The ground was covered with gooseberries of two species, the best that I have ever eaten. One of our men brought me some strawberries that he had just picked. We had killed an elk and several black-tailed deer. Buffalo were quite numerous, too, so that the mountainside looked like one continuous barnyard. Farther on, however, we found only an occasional animal. We could see clearly a third, snow-covered mountain; we had avoided the first and now turned southward.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1664: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys: “So going home and my coach stopping in Newgate market over against a poulterer's shop. I took occasion to buy a rabbit; but it proved a deadly old one when I came to eat it—as I did do after an hour's being at my office.”

1666: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys. The Great Fire of London was still burning, and Pepys wrote,

I saw good Butts of sugar broke open in the street, and people go and take handfuls and put into beer and drink it. . . . At home did go with Sir W. Batten and our neighbour knightly . . . to Sir R. Ford's, and there dined, in an earthen platter a fried breast of mutton, a great many of us. But very merry; and ended as good a meal, though as ugly a one, as ever I had in my life.

September 7

A DIPLOMATIC DINNER

1977: USA

President Jimmy Carter entertained the Latin American Heads of State and other world leaders at a dinner to celebrate the signing of the Panama Canal Treaty.

Guests included the heads of state and ministers from Paraguay, the Dominican Republic, Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Venezuela, Guatemala, Columbia, Honduras, Peru, Ecuador, Argentina, Uruguay, El Salvador, Canada, Panama, Jamaica, Bahamas, Grenada, Brazil, Guyana, Haiti, Nicaragua, Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago, Surinam, and Barbados. Music was provided by Isaac Stern and Andre Previn and singer Martina Arroyo, and the menu was:

Maine Lobster en Belle-Vue

Remoulade Sauce

Ste. Michelle Dry Chenin Blanc

Roast Saddle of Veal

Selection of Fresh Vegetables

Simi Rose of Cabernet Sauvignon

Watercress and Mushroom Salad

Bel Paese Cheese

Chocolate Basket Surprise

Gold Seal Blanc de Blancs

Demitasse

The following day First Lady Rosalynn Carter hosted a luncheon for the wives of the official delegates aboard the catamaran *America* (see **September 8**).

A GRAND IMPERIAL DINNER

1872: Berlin

Three European sovereigns were present in Berlin at this time for some diplomatic maneuverings. They were Emperor Wilhelm I of Germany, Emperor Francis Joseph I of Austria, and Tsar Alexander II of Russia. It was a hot day, and “even the fashionable people in the carriages . . . visibly groaned under the load of pleasure they had laid upon their unsuspecting shoulders this tropical morning.”

After a long demonstration of the Trooping of the Colours and other military displays involving 35,000 men, there was a banquet. The bill of fare was:

Potage Tortue à l’Anglaise—Consommé Printanier aux Quenelles

Saumon garni Sauce Genevoise—Turbot sauce aux Crevettes

Filets de Boeuf à la Jardinière—Selle de Veau à la Financière

Hure de Sanglier sauce Cumberland—Homards à la Geleé sauce Mayonnaise

Boullards de Mans Rôties—Jeunes Faisans et Gibier Divers

Fonds d’Artichauts à l’Italienne—Asperges Hollandaise

Gelée en Champagne garnie d’Ananas—Charlotte Parisienne aux Pêches

Fromage

Glacées—Compôtes

Dessert

FOOD FIRSTS

1643: America

The records of the Massachusetts Bay Colony contain an entry on this day regarding the first innkeeper’s licence issued to a woman: “Goody Armitage is allowed to keepe the ordinary, but not to drawe wine.”

An *ordinary* is an inn where meals were served.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

1674: Netherlands

The first organisms seen through the microscope were mites found in cheese and flour. The inventor of the microscope and “Father of Microbiology,” Antonie van Leeuwenhoek, described them in a letter to the Royal Society of London on this day.

Examining this water . . . I found floating therein divers earthy particles, and some green streaks, spirally wound serpent-wise . . . and I judge that some of these little creatures were above a thousand times smaller than the smallest ones I have ever yet seen, upon the rind of cheese, in wheaten flour, mould, and the like.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1819: USA

Alonzo Delano (1809–1874) traveled overland to California in 1849–1851.

Our information with regard to the distance to the next water, proved incorrect; for, six miles from our encampment, we found an excellent spring, about twenty rods to the right of the road. The days were very hot, while the nights were so cold that ice formed in our buckets half an inch thick. The road during the day was quite good, and before night we arrived at a wide opening, or valley, in the mountains, where there were lateral valleys opening into it, with high mountains on the sides, which gave us an extended view. One of the accompanying trains slaughtered an ox, and the science of cooking was never displayed to better advantage than in the camps around us, as well as in our own.

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt’s journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia.

As our tea bag was getting very low, and as I was afraid that we should

have to go a long time without this most useful article, I thought it advisable to make a more saving arrangement. We had, consequently, a pot of good tea at luncheon, when we arrived at our camp tired and exhausted, and most in want of an exciting and refreshing beverage. The tea-leaves remaining in the pot were saved and boiled up for supper, allowing a pint to each person. In the morning, we had our soup, and drank water *ad libitum*. Tea is unquestionably one of the most important provisions of such an expedition: sugar is of very little consequence, and I believe that one does even better without it. We have not felt the slightest inconvenience from the want of flour; and we were a long time without salt. The want of the latter, however, made us costive, and, when we began to use it again, almost every one of us had a slight attack of diarrhoea.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1782: Britain

From the diaries of John Byng, Fifth Viscount Torrington, written during his horseback tours of England and Wales:

Andover, Hampshire. I never dined worse, or was in a crosser humour about it; a little miserable stale trout, some raw, rank mutton chops and some cold hard potatoes. For the sake of hasty gain, innkeepers hire horrid servants, buy bad provisions, and poisonous liquors; wou'd any man dare, with a large capital, to set up a good inn, with the best beds, and wine, he wou'd get a fortune, let him charge ever so highly. I am more and more convinced that fowls are the only things to bespeak at an inn, every other dish is either ill-dress'd or the leavings of other companies.

1846: USA

Henry Thoreau was on the first of his three trips into the Maine woods, and recorded his impressions in detail.

The cornel, or bunch-berries, were very abundant, as well as Solomon's seal and moose-berries. Blueberries were distributed along our whole route; and in one place the bushes were drooping with the weight of the fruit, still as fresh as ever. Such patches afforded a grateful repast, and served to bait the tired party forward. When any lagged behind, the cry of "blue-berries"

the tired party forward. When any lagged behind, the cry of "DIE-BENIES" was most effectual to bring them up.

September 8

LUNCHEON WITH THE FIRST LADY

1977: USA

First Lady Rosalynn Carter hosted a luncheon for the wives of the delegates present in the United States for the signing of the Panama Canal Treaty (see September 7). Luncheon was held aboard the Wilson Lines Catamaran *America* during a cruise down the Potomac River to Mount Vernon. Guests were taken on a tour of Mount Vernon before returning to Washington by car.

Avocado with Maryland Crab

Jamestown Country Ham

White Asparagus Vinaigrette

Virginia Fried Apples

Beaten Biscuits

Southern Trifle Cake

Iced Tea

EATING CROW

1936: USA

The *San Mateo Times* (California) on this day quoted Oklahoma assistant attorney general Jess Pullen's vow to renew his "culinary campaign" against the crow in the fall, and referred to him as "an apostle of the theory 'a crow on every menu.'"

The newspaper continued:

Pullen, for years, has been preaching that the crow should be made a table delicacy, to end the birds' menace to crops. He argues that if the crow were made a staple diet, the bird would soon disappear.

Further, Pullen argues that the crow is a table delicacy when cooked in flavoured broths and served with plenty of garnishment.

For several weeks last year, it became almost a patriotic duty in the South-West, particularly in Oklahoma, to eat crow—like eating “substitute” flour during the war.

Pullen gave a state dinner with crow as the main delicacy. . .

Restaurants started serving crow on the menus, poultry dealers handled the birds, and the fad spread to Kansas where similar dinners to Pullen's were given.

Some sceptics said they would “as soon eat a buzzard.” Pullen answered that a crow was “cleaner than a hog or a chicken, and we've been eating both since antiquity.”

However, the fad died out. Restaurants took crow off the menus. Pullen believes this is because the main “flight” of the birds went north to the Dakota Badlands to nest during the summer.

In October, they'll be back, and I intend to start people eating them again,” Pullen said. “Crows are good eating, and if people will eat them we'll soon be rid of one of the worst enemies of migratory game fowl.

The state dinner mentioned in the newspaper was given on February 18, 1936. The *Ada Evening News* (Oklahoma) gave a brief report on the meal, under the heading “Governor Eats Crow.” The governor, E. W. Marland, said, as he picked at a crow wing in full view of the media “It's the finest young crow I've ever eaten.” Fifty state officials sat down to one baked crow apiece, and most were apparently eaten. When Pullen called upon Marland to make a speech, his response was a recitation of “Four and Twenty Blackbirds Baked in a Pie.”

Pullen gave his recipe in December 1936, when another crow banquet was proposed:

Baked Crow

I dress, draw, and parboil until the meat is tender. Then make a rich, juicy dressing, bake until brown and serve with the dressing, French fried potatoes, celery hearts, olives, assorted bread, nuts, and hot coffee.

TROOP SHIP BREAKFAST

1946: At Sea

The USAT *General O. H. Ernst* was nearing the end of her military career by this date. She had been decommissioned as a troop ship on August 15, and was transferred to the War Shipping Administration, after which she made several trips to the Philippines, finally returning to San Francisco on September 30, 1946.

Breakfast

Stewed Prunes—Iced Pineapple Juice

Assorted Dry Cereals

Rolled Oats

Broiled Bacon

Eggs to Order: Fried or Scrambled

Griddle Cakes and Sirup

Jelly—Apple Butter

Coffee—Cocoa—Tea

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1774: New Caledonia

Captain James Cook and his two naturalists, J. R. Forster and his son Georg, ate

aboard the *Resolution*, at anchor off New Caledonia, and nearly died of blowfish poisoning. That afternoon the ship's clerk traded with a native for a fish.

Later, Cook recorded in his journal:

The operation of describing and drawing took up so much time till it was too late so that only the Liver and Roe was dressed of which the two Mr. Forsters and myself did but just taste. About 3 or 4 o'clock in the Morning we were seized with an extraordinary weakness in all our limbs attended with a numbness or Sensation like to that caused by exposing ones hands or feet to a fire after having been pinched by frost, I had almost lost the sense of feeling nor could I distinguish between light and heavy bodies, a quart pot full of Water and a feather was the same in my hand. . . . In [the morning] one of the Pigs which had eaten the fish intestines was found dead.

This is the first known reference in English to poisoning by puffer fish (*fugu*).

1852: Australia

Ellen Clacy accompanied her brother to the Goldfields of Victoria in 1852–1853. In a diary note in this day she described the making of damper, the Australian bush staple.

I awoke rather early this morning, not feeling over-comfortable from having slept in my clothes all night, which it is necessary to do on the journey, so as never to be unprepared for any emergency. A small corner of my brother's tent had been partitioned off for my bed-room; it was quite dark, so my first act on waking was to push aside one of the blankets, still wet, which had been my roof during the night, and thus admit air and light into my apartments. Having made my toilette—after a fashion—I joined my companions on the watch, who were deep in the mysteries of preparing something eatable for breakfast. I discovered that their efforts were concentrated on the formation of a damper, which seemed to give them no little difficulty. A damper is the legitimate, and, in fact, only bread of the bush, and should be made solely of flour and water, well mixed and kneaded into a cake, as large as you like, but not more than two inches in thickness, and then placed among the hot ashes to bake. If well-made, it is very sweet and a good substitute for bread. The rain had, however, spoiled

our ashes, the dough would neither rise nor brown, so in despair we mixed a fresh batch of flour and water, and having fried some rashers of fat bacon till they were nearly melted, we poured the batter into the pan and let it fry till done. This impromptu dish gave general satisfaction and was pronounced a cross between a pancake and a heavy suet pudding.

ANNIVERSARY

1911: Texas

This was the birthday of Euell Gibbons, the leader in the resurgence of interest in wild food in the United States in the early 1960s. He was not, per se, an advocate of living off the land, or survival skills, but was interested in the nutritional and culinary value of plants often thrown away as weeds. He learned many of his foraging skills from his mother, and honed them out of necessity during the dust bowl years in New Mexico when he largely fed the family with his gleanings. His first book, *Stalking the Wild Asparagus*, published in 1962, was an instant success. He followed with *Stalking the Blue-Eyed Scallop* in 1964 and *Stalking the Healthful Herbs* in 1966.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1773: Scotland

From James Boswell's *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson*.

The approach to Rasay was pleasing. . . . It was past six-o'clock when we arrived. Some excellent brandy was served round immediately, according to the custom of the Highlands, where a dram is generally taken every day. They call it a *scalch*. On a side-board was placed for us, who had come off the sea, a substantial dinner, and a variety of wines. Then we had coffee and tea.

1856: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau: "Gathered flowering raspberries in all my walks and found them a pleasant berry, large, but never abundant. . . . I hear that two thousand dollars' worth of huckleberries have been sold by the town of

Asndy this season.”

1917

Frank N. Meyer worked for the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Plant Introduction Station in Santa Ana, California. He made four long expeditions to Europe, Russia, Japan, and China, seeking new and potentially useful crops for the United States, and was ultimately responsible for introducing 2,500 plants into the country. The Meyer lemon is named in his honor.

Meyer was an early enthusiast for the soybean, and had the opportunity to try many soybean products while he was in China. When he returned from his first expedition in 1908, he brought with him eighteen different varieties of the soybean.

During his fourth, and final, visit to South China, he wrote in a letter on this day: “Beancurd and beanmilk always taste beany !—The cheese, however, has lost this unpleasant characteristic. If soft beancurd is beaten up, with sugar, it also improves much in flavor.”

Meyer disappeared on May 18, 1918, while traveling down the Yangtze river from Hankow to Shanghai on the S.S. *Feng Yang Maru*. It is not known if his death was accidental or the result of suicide.

September 9

CHRYSANTHEMUM FESTIVAL

Japan & China

Choyo no Sekku was originally a Chinese festival held on the ninth day of the ninth month. It was seasonal celebration at which the summer clothes were formally replaced with warmer winter wear.

The traditional fare was *kurimeshi* (rice cooked with chestnuts) and *kiku no sake* (chrysanthemum wine). In China, chrysanthemum wine is drunk on this day in the belief that this will ensure longevity, and also to honor the Six Dynasties poet Tao Yuan-Ming, whose most famous poem is about the chrysanthemum.

The chrysanthemum is one of the most popular edible flowers. It originated in China, where it has remained a great favorite. The flowers are made into tea, and are used to flavor wine and soups. The leaves are steamed or boiled and used as a green vegetable.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1843: USA

Nancy M. Johnson, of Philadelphia, PA, was granted Patent No. 3,254 for a hand-cranked “Artificial Freezer” described as an “Improvement in the Art of Producing Artificial Ices.”

Her invention consisted of two cylinders, an outer one containing a salt and ice mixture, and an inner one with a “revolving curved beater” in which the mixture to be frozen is placed, and the beater turned by means of a handle. The inventor also discussed construction material in the patent specifications:

I do not confine myself to any particular material in the construction of the freezer or beater for lemon, orange and other juices containing acid which might react slightly upon tinned iron, I prefer glass cylinders for freezers and hard wood or ivory for the wings of my beater, for cream and other substances which are not acid in their properties, the thickest of tinned iron is the most suitable material of which to form the beater.

1930: USA

Clarence Birdseye was granted Patent No. 1,775,549 for a “Method of Packaging Fruit Juices.”

His invention was intended to overcome some of the problems associated with shipping and storing fruit juices:

In the first place, the fresh juices, upon being separated from the fruit, almost immediately begin to undergo change of flavor and deterioration due to bacteriological action, decomposition, oxidation, and other chemical or fermentive processes. In the second place, fresh fruit juices undergo mechanical changes in composition due to coagulation, separation, and breaking down of the emulsion in which various ingredients are suspended,

and this mechanical deterioration is often hastened or intensified by the preservative processes to which the fresh juice is subjected.

One desirable manner of carrying out my invention consists in placing the fruit juice in a bag or other enclosure of flexible moisture-proof material, supporting the enclosure so that it will, under the fluid pressure of the fruit juice, assume the shape desired in the product, and freezing the fruit juice while thus enclosed to form a partially wrapped solid cake. The exposed area of the frozen product is thus reduced to a minimum and the cake may be completely wrapped without so exposing the body thereof at any time to the atmosphere.

MOVIES & FOOD

1994: Canada

The movie *Eat Drink Man Woman* by Ang Lee opened at the Toronto Film Festival on this day. It is about “The Ingredients of Life” as seen through the eyes of a Chinese man and his grown daughters. It is a marvelous celebration of both food and family, and is packed with beautiful images of food preparation and eating.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1619: Canada

From the journals of Jens Munck’s voyage in search of a northwest passage to India in 1619–1620. They had crossed Hudson’s Bay by this date, and, not finding the mysterious inlet that would supposedly lead to the northwest passage, they went ashore at the mouth of the river now known as the Churchill on September 7, where they remain for a few days. Some of the men were suffering from scurvy.

The crew, having suffered much from the before mentioned gale and in other hardship and trouble, and a part in consequence being down with illness, I caused, during these days, the sick people to be brought from the ship on shore; and we gathered still some cloud-berries, gooseberries, and other berries, which in Norway are called Tydebær and Kragbær. I also

had a good fire made on shore every day for the sick, whereby they were comforted, and in time nicely regained their health.

1642: Mauritius

From the journal of Abel Tasman's voyage from Batavia (Indonesia) to find "the unknown South Land."

Worshipful Van der Stel informs us that he has got positive orders from the Honourable Governor-General and Councillors of India not to serve out more than one small glass of arrack to each of his men, and this only to such as are cold, wet and dirty. In order to maintain peace among the men and prevent discontent, ill-will and envy as far as in us lies we have therefore deemed it best to serve out only half a small glass of arrack to our men while we are lying in this roadstead.

1797: Africa

From the narrative of the travels of Francisco José de Lacerda e Almeida *To the Land of King Cazembe*.

The village referred to lies but a short way off the road; being indisposed, I did not visit it, though they tell me it is one of the largest we have passed. The Muizas sold but little millet-flour, because they possess little: this, too, in early harvest time!—what will they have in three months hence, and how do they manage in years of scarcity? The meal offered by the Maraves was very white; amongst these negroes it is wheat-coloured, because they do not clean it of the bran lest the waste should leave them without food. Necessity obliges man to all things. For this small quantity they hoe the ground into mounds, and upon these they plant millet and some beans. I judge that one of the bases of their support is the sun-dried and sliced sweet potato (*Cimvolvulus batata*); of that they sold a fair portion, but they would not take up the fresh, although it was either full-ripe or over-ripe. Sometimes they attempted to sell the old, reserving the fresh for their own use.

Half a bushel (alqueire) of flour, a chicken, and a little basket of sweet potatoes, was the present sent to me by the powerful Morungaoambara. We raised our hands in thanks to Heaven, when, after abundant difficulty, we

bought ten lean cockerels, which seemed to us so many fat turkeys. We also obtained some ground-nuts, of which we made oil as seasoning to our rice, lest the meat and dripping might injure our stomachs and salt produce painful thirst. The information touching salt existing in this country, as given by Manoel Caetano Pereira and by the Caffres, is wrong: if there be any, it is so little that not a grain has appeared. What there is comes from the city.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1773: Scotland

From James Boswell's *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson*.

At breakfast this morning, among a profusion of other things, there were oat-cakes, made of what is called *graddanad* meal, that is, meal made of grain separated from the husks, and toasted by the fire, instead of being threshed and kiln-dried. This seems to be bad management, as so much fodder is consumed by it. Mr. McQueen however defended it, by saying, that it is doing the thing much quicker, as one operation effects what is otherwise done by two. His chief reason however was, that the servants in Sky are, according to him, a faithless pack, and steal what they can; so that much is saved by the corn passing but once through their hands, as at each time they pilfer some. It appears to me, that the *graddaning* is a strong proof of the laziness of the Highlanders, who will rather make fire act for them, at the expense of fodder, than labour themselves. There was also, what I cannot help disliking at breakfast, cheese: it is the custom over all the Highlands to have it; and it often smells very strong, and poisons to a certain degree the elegance of an Indian repast.

By "Indian repast," Boswell seems to be referring to breakfast as an Indian meal, perhaps because of the prominence of tea.

1844: European Alps

Charles Dickens was traveling with his brother Frederick from France to Italy. They stopped on this night at an inn on the Alps.

We lay last night at the first halting-place on this journey, in an inn which is not entitled, as it ought to be, The house of call for fleas and vermin in general, but is entitled The grand hotel of the Post! I hardly know what to compare it to. It seemed something like a house in Somers Town originally built for a wine-vaults and never finished, but grown very old. There was nothing to eat in it and nothing to drink. They had lost the teapot; and when they found it, they couldn't make out what had become of the lid, which, turning up at last and being fixed on to the teapot, couldn't be got off again for the pouring-in of more water. Fleas of elephantine dimensions were gambolling boldly in the dirty beds; and the mosquitoes!—But here let me draw a curtain (as I would have done if there had been any). We had scarcely any sleep, and rose up with hands and arms hardly human.

September 10

COFFEE IN PALERMO

1806: Palermo, Sicily

The following advertisement, dated this day, appeared in the *Times* in September 1806:

In the Coffeehouse of M. Francis Geraci in Centorinara's street num. 98, at Palermo, a Company of four people served with three dishes of meat and poultry eight dishes of sausage, cheese, olives, fruits, greens, &c. for desert, bread, and two bottles of wine, will pay six dollars.

If the people were more than the said four, every person exceeding that number will pay one dollar.

A company of four people served with six dishes of Meat & poultry, sixteen dishes of sausage, cheese, olives &c, for deserts, bread, two bottles of wine, a dish of sweetmeats, ice, and coffee, will pay two dollars.

If the company would have more things than the above-mentioned, they will pay according to the following prices.

- Lionell-wine, Port-wine, Canaries-wine, Malaga-wine, &c, half a

Dollar for every bottle.

- Moscato-wine & Mulvassi-wine (these are sweet wines) two shillings a bottle.
- A large Cup of Cofee with milk, & sugar, six pence.
- A little cup of coffee with sugar, one penny.
- A Glass of ice of any kind six pence.
- Biscuits half a penny each.
- A Dish of sausage one Shilling.
- A Bottle of Rosolio of Fagioli, of several kinds, half a Dollar.
- A small bottle of Rosolio of the same Geraci one shilling.

Those people then, which will have a dinner as before has been mentioned, must advise the said Geraci at least one hour before, in order that he could dress it, & they must leave some money, in order that in case, they should miss their engagement, the said money will remain to Geraci to amend for the loss he will suffer for the dinner left him.

Palermo, Sicily, Sept. 10, 1806

MIKE THE HEADLESS CHICKEN DAY

1945: USA

Farmer Olsen of Fruita, Colorado, was getting his dinner ready by catching a chicken and chopping off its head. To his amazement, the headless chicken jumped off the chopping block and attempted to peck at some corn. With regular feeds from an eye dropper, "Mike" lived for four years and became quite a celebrity, even making it into *Time* and *Life* magazine and *The Guinness Book of Records*. His life is celebrated at a festival each May in Fruits.

THE IRISH FAMINE

1847: Ireland

A letter to the editor of *The Cork Examiner* described the generally grim situation and the riots occurring in Ireland as a result of the potato blight.

Bantry, Sept. 6th, 1847.

SIR,—This ill-fated and almost depopulated town became this day the scene of indescribable confusion. The withdrawal of the rations, coupled with the frightful prospect of an approaching winter, have blighted all hopes of existence, and goaded the enraged multitude to desperation. The consequences were painfully exhibited this day. The wretched and famished inhabitants of the neighbouring parishes proceeded to town, and from thence to the Workhouse, where they demanded admission, and as might be expected, were refused. They were not long supplicating, when a large party of military and police were on the ground, commanded by a Captain and Sub-Inspector of Constabulary, all under the control of minor Hutchinson, J.P.

At this stage of the proceedings, the hungry and disappointed applicants commenced uprooting a plot of potato ground attached to the Workhouse; but the military obliged them to retreat as quickly as their exhausted strength would permit them. Some of the dispersed people plucked up some turnips, and eat them whilst retiring. Still nothing serious occurred. Three only were captured for the very clamorous manner in which they sought to obtain food.

It is rumoured here that the melancholy scenes of this day are to be renewed on tomorrow and each succeeding day, until the people find a refuge in the Workhouse.

Jeremiah O' Callaghan

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1790: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde: "On our return home found a Note on my Table from Mr. Jeanes, to put off our dining with him, on Monday next

instead of to Morrow. As the Haunch of Venison will be better by being kept till them as supposed by some—Hope it will be sweet.”

1852: USA

From the notebooks of Nathaniel Hawthorne.

After dinner, came the *Fanny*, bringing, among other freight, a large basket of delicious pears to me, together with a note from Mr. B. B. Titcomb. He is certainly a man of excellent taste and admirable behavior. I sent a plateful of pears to the room of each guest now in the hotel, kept a dozen for myself, and gave the balance to Mr. Lughton.

1852: Australia

From the journals of Ellen Clacy, who accompanied her brother to the Goldfields of Victoria in 1852–1853.

With some reluctance I aroused myself from a very heavy slumber produced by the over fatigue of the preceding day. I found every one preparing to start; kindly considerate, my companions thought a good sleep more refreshing for me than breakfast, and had deferred awakening me till quite obliged, so taking a few sailors' biscuits in my pocket to munch on the way, I bade farewell to a spot whose natural beauties I have never seen surpassed.

The “Bush Inn” . . . The charges at these houses are enormous. Five and six shillings per meal, seven-and-sixpence for a bottle of ale, and one shilling for half a glass or “nobbler” of brandy.

September 11

ENKUTATASH

This is New Year's Day in Ethiopia, which uses the Coptic calendar. It is also the traditional end of the rainy season, and the festivities incorporate some seasonal elements. It is also celebrated as the day that the legendary Queen of Sheba supposedly returned from her visit to King Solomon.

In a practice which has echoes in other places and times in history (such as Halloween, for example), children go from house to house, giving flowers and hoping to receive handfuls of *dabo* in return. The other food tradition is that an animal is slaughtered for feasting—the most auspicious being a white-headed lamb or a red chicken.

WORLD FOOD

1947: Geneva, the World Food Council

The eighteen-nation Food and Agriculture Organization voted to establish a World Food Council, and unanimously elected Lord Bruce of Melbourne as its first chairman. The council was to be an advisory body designed to aid in coordinating national and international food policies. Postwar Europe remained in dire straits, with a grim winter predicted, and Lord Bruce said that the short-term outlook on world food conditions was sombre and dark, and long-term hopes of recovery would be destroyed unless remedial action was taken.

SOCIAL FORCES AT WORK

1812: Nottingham, England

The *Morning Chronicle* of this date carried a report on the most recent food riot in Nottingham, which had been in progress for days. Nottingham, in common with many other industrial centers, was suffering from a serious economic situation. The group known as Luddites originated in Nottingham, and its avowed intent was to smash the machinery which, it was believed, was causing job losses.

Almost half the population of Nottingham was receiving parish relief at this time, which was minimal at best, and many were hungry. Rioting had been occurring intermittently since early 1811. Many of the rioters were women struggling to find food for their families. On September 8, 1812, the disturbances escalated and the *Morning Chronicle* of this day reported:

On Tuesday [the 8th] morning the scenes of tumult were renewed with increased violence: carts loaded with potatoes were stopped in the streets and sold at reduced prices: a corn warehouse was attacked with great fury, as well as many bakers' shops, without any mischief being done, except the

as well as many bakers' shops, without any mischief being done, except the breaking of windows, and some other trifling affairs. What added to the tumult was, the bread served out to the soldiers was found to be short of weight; and many of them were, on Monday, seen active in the mob. A peace officer and a party of the West Kent Militia are now stationed in every house or warehouse considered in danger, while parties of hussars constantly parade the streets.

By the evening, the authorities felt that the situation was under control, although small groups of soldiers remained station in some bakers' premises, to protect their property.

One knitter (a hosiery worker) said:

I have five children and a wife. The children all under 8 years of age, I get 9d. clear [per week]. . . . I work sixteen hours a day to get that. . . . It will take 2d. per week coals, 1d. per week candles. My family live on potatoes chiefly and we have one pint of milk per day.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1770: Timor

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks: "*Off Timor*. By day Break in the morn another shark was caught: the two together weighing 126 lb were servd to the ships company and every man in her, I may venture to affirm, from the Captn to the Swabber dind heartily upon it."

1833: Argentina

From Charles Darwin's journal of the voyage of the *Beagle*. At this time Darwin was overlanding it from Bahia Blanca to Buenos Aires, and had hired a gaucho to accompany him.

Soon afterwards we perceived by the cloud of dust, that a party of horsemen were coming towards us. . . . They turned out to be a party of Bernantio's friendly tribe, going to a salina for salt. The Indians eat much salt, their children sucking it like sugar. This habit is very different from that of the Spanish Gauchos, who, leading the same kind of life, eat scarcely any;

according to Mungo Park it is people who live on vegetable food who have an unconquerable desire for salt.

1853: Mecca

From the narrative of Sir Richard Burton (1821–1890), who traveled (in disguise) to Mecca in 1853. They arrived in the early hours of this day, and are received hospitably:

Presently the youth returned. His manner had changed from a boisterous and jaunty demeanour to one of grave and attentive courtesy—I had become his guest. He led me into the gloomy hall, seated me upon a large carpeted Mastabah, or platform, and told his *bara Miyan* (great Sir), the Hindustani porter, to bring a light. Meanwhile a certain shuffling of slippered feet above informed my ears that the *Kabirah*, the mistress of the house, was intent on hospitable thoughts. When the camels were unloaded, appeared a dish of fine vermicelli, browned and powdered with loaf sugar. The boy, Mohammed I, and Shaykh Nur, lost no time in exerting our right hands; and truly, after our hungry journey, we found the *Kunafah* delicious. After the meal we procured cots from a neighbouring coffee-house, and we lay down, weary, and anxious to snatch an hour or two of repose.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1780: England

John Wesley was touring England, and recorded in his journal:

As I drew near Bath, I wondered what had drawn such a multitude of people together, till I learned that one of the members for the city had given an ox to be roasted whole. But their sport was sadly interrupted by heavy rain, which sent them home faster than they came; many of whom dropped in at our chapel, where I suppose they never had been before.

September 12

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1716: England

Arthur Bunyan was granted Patent No.408 for a method of expressing oil from sunflower seeds. The patent application is the first European record of using sunflower seeds as a source of oil, and although the intention at the time was to produce oil for industrial use, it was an inevitable step in the progress to using it for culinary purposes.

How from a certain English seed might be expressed a good sweet oil of great use to all persons concerned in the woollen manufacture, painters, leather dressers etc . . . such oil so to be made is to be expressed from the seed of the flowers commonly called & known by the name of sunflowers of all sorts, both double & single.

1933: USA

Leo C. Brown, of Chicago, Illinois, was granted Patent No. 1,926,369 for “An Improvement in Peanut Butter.” The patent specifications noted two problems particular to nut butter—the objectionable tendency for “gravitational separation” of the solid and oily constituents, and the objectionable tendency of it to stick to the roof of the mouth (because it does not mix with saliva). The patentees’ solution to both of these problems was to add to the paste “mono-glyceryl . . . or the diglyceryl ester of a fatty acid, or a mixture of both.”

A LEGACY OF CUTLERY

1463: England

John Baret of Bury St. Edmunds made his will on this day, and he made bequests of several pieces of cutlery—a fork for green ginger, three new knives *entyrmewsyd* [inlaid?] with silver, and three old carving knives with shafts *harneysid* [wrapped around?] with silver.

Itm j yeve and beqwethe to Davn John Kertelynge, my silvir forke for grene gyngor . . .

Itm to Maister Bertilmew my iij. newe knyves entyrmewsyd with silvir, ther in wretyn Grace me governe . . .

Itm to Jankyn Aylleward iij. old kervyng knywes with white shaftes harneysid with silvir.

Forks were not in common use at this time, and those that did exist were for specific purposes, such as the one mentioned above. They were expensive, highly prized possessions, and it can therefore be assumed that John Baret was well-to-do. In the Jewel-house inventory of Henry VIII (1457–1509) there is mention of “one sponne wt suckett fork at the end of silver and gilt.”

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1619

From the journals of Jens Munck’s voyage in search for a northwest passage to India in 1619–1620.

In the morning early, a large white bear came down to the water near the ship, which stood and ate some Beluga flesh, off a fish so named which I had caught the day before. I shot the bear, and the men all desired the flesh for food, which I also allowed. I ordered the cook just to boil it slightly, and then to keep it in vinegar for a night, and I myself had two or three pieces of this bear-flesh roasted for the cabin. It was of good taste and did not disagree with us.

1819: USA

Alonzo Delano (1809–1874) traveled overland to California in 1849–1851.

We were now in the valley of plenty. Our poor teeth, which had been laboring on the filelike consistency of pilot bread, had now a respite, in the agreeable task of masticating from the “flesh pots” of California.

As we determined to lay over during the day, our wagon master, Traverse, concluded to butcher an ox, and the hungry Arabs of our train were regaled with a feast of dead kine. Feeling an aristocratic longing for a rich beef steak, I determined to have one. There was not a particle of fat in the steak to make gravy, nor was there a slice of bacon to be had to fry it with, and the flesh was as dry and as hard as a bone. But a nice broiled steak, with a plenty of gravy, I would have--and I had it. The inventive genius of an

emigrant is almost constantly called forth on the plains, and so in my case. I laid a nice cut on the coals, which, instead of broiling, only burnt, and carbonized like a piece of wood, and when one side was turned to cinder, I whopped it over to make charcoal of the other. To make butter gravy, I melted a stearin candle, which I poured over the delicious tit-bit, and, smacking my lips, sat down to my feast, the envy of several lookers-on. I sopped the first mouthful in the nice looking gravy, and put it between my teeth, when the gravy cooled almost instantly, and the roof of my mouth and my teeth were coated all over with a covering like hard beeswax, making mastication next to impossible.

“How does it go?” asked one.

“O, first rate,” said I, struggling to get the hard, dry morsel down my throat; and cutting off another piece, which was free from the delicious gravy, “Come, try it,” said I; “I have more than I can eat, (which was true). You are welcome to it.” The envious, hungry soul sat down, and putting a large piece between his teeth, after rolling it about in his mouth awhile, deliberately spit it out, saying, with an oath, that “Chips and beeswax are hard fare, even for a starving man.”

Ah, how hard words and want of sentiment will steal over one’s better nature on the plains. As for the rest of the steak, we left it to choke the wolves.

We were successful in killing ducks, and our evening meal was more palatable. At night a hunter came in and reported that he had seen an out-crop of slate on a mountain bordering the valley below, and from his description we thought there were indications of gold, and a small party was organized for prospecting the following morning.

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt’s journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia.

I frequently tasted the fine-looking fruit of the Pandanus, but was every time severely punished with sore lips and a blistered tongue; and the first time that I ate it, I was attacked by a violent diarrhoea. I could not make out

now the natives neutralized the noxious properties of the fruit; which, from the large heaps in their camps, seemed to form no small portion of their food. The fruit appeared either to have been soaked, or roasted and broken, to obtain the kernels; for which purpose we invariably found large flat stones and pebbles to pound them with. I supposed that they washed out the sweet mealy matter contained between the stringy fibres, and that they drank the liquid, as they do with the honey; and that their large koolimans which we had occasionally seen, were used for the purpose. I, consequently, gathered some very ripe fruit, scraped the soft part with a knife, and washed it until all the sweet substance was out, and then boiled it; by which process it lost almost all its sharpness, had a very pleasant taste, and, taken in moderate quantities, did not affect the bowels. The fruit should be so ripe as to be ready to drop from the tree.

1836: USA

From missionary Narcissa Whitman's journal of her journey in 1836 from New York, across the Rocky Mountains, to Oregon and beyond.

We are now in Vancouver. What a delightful place this is; what a contrast to the rough, barren sand plains, through which we had so recently passed. Here we find fruit of every description, apples, peaches, grapes, pears, plums, and fig trees in abundance; also cucumbers, melons, beans, peas, beets, cabbage, tomatoes and every kind of vegetable too numerous to be mentioned. Every part is very neat and tastefully arranged, with fine walks, lined on each side with strawberry vines. At the opposite end of the garden is a good summer house covered with grape vines. Here I must mention the origin of these grapes and apples. A gentleman, twelve years ago while at a party in London, put the seeds of the grapes and apples which he ate into his vest pocket. Soon afterwards he took a voyage to this country and left them here, and now they are greatly multiplied.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1763: France

From Tobias Smollett's *Travels through France and Italy*.

Here is plenty of table-linen however. The poorest tradesman in Boulogne

has a napkin on every cover, and silver forks with four prongs, which are used with the right hand, there being very little occasion for knives; for the meat is boiled or roasted to rags. The bourgeois of Boulogne have commonly soup and bouilli at noon, and a roast, with a salad, for supper; and at all their meals there is a dessert of fruit. This indeed is the practice all over France. On meagre days they eat fish, omelettes, fried beans, fricassees of eggs and onions, and burnt cream. The tea which they drink in the afternoon is rather boiled than infused; it is sweetened all together with coarse sugar, and drank with an equal quantity of boiled milk.

1850: At Sea

On this date, a group of migrants en route from England to New Zealand aboard the *Charlotte Jane* were several days into their journey. They had been sponsored by the Canterbury Association (a Church of England organization) and were to start a new colony based on the best English traditions. One of those aboard, Edward Ward, recorded his breakfast on this day.

Hashed beef, beefsteaks and beef kidney (making the most of beef which must soon be denied us), potatoes—very good—soft bread, biscuit and butter, tea and coffee, cold beef, fresh and corned. Used some of the Killinchy butter which, having been broken in the crocks, was consigned to the steward for cabin use. It was generally approved of.

September 13

A COFFEE MANIFESTO

1772: Prussia

Frederick II, known as “Frederick the Great” (1712–1786) issued a manifesto on this day:

It is disgusting to note the increase in the quantity of coffee used by my subjects and the amount of money that goes out of the country in consequence. Everybody is using coffee. If possible this must be prevented. My people must drink beer. His Majesty was brought up on beer, and so were his officers. Many battles have been fought and won by soldiers

nourished on beer; and the King does not believe that coffee-drinking soldiers can be depended upon to endure hardships or to beat his enemies in case of another war.

FOOD WORDS

1862: Australia

A journalist for the *Melbourne Leader* made a serious grammatical error on this day in reporting on the menu for an event. He wrote, “The bill of fare included leporine, which is betwixt a hare and a rabbit.” There is in fact no such hybrid animal as a leporine. The word is an adjective, not a noun, and means “pertaining to a hare or hares; of the nature or form of a hare.” Similarly derived words are bovine, porcine, piscine, asinine, and feline.

ICE TO INDIA

1833: India

The first shipment of clean, luxury ice arrived in Calcutta from Boston on this day, thanks to Frederic Tudor (“Boston’s Ice King”) of the Tudor Ice Company. The ship *Tuscany* had been loaded with approximately 180 tons of ice cut from frozen New England lakes using an innovative and efficient horse-drawn, metal ice-plow. There was no refrigeration at this time, but the hold had been specially insulated for its unusual cargo. After a four-month voyage, to the amazement and delight of Indians and expatriates, 100 tons of pristine ice remained for sale.

SOCIAL FORCES AT WORK

1789: France

Bread riots continued to escalate in the wake of the fall of the Bastille. On this particular day an angry crowd, made up mostly of women, tried to hang a baker who they alleged was selling poor-quality bread at high prices to the poor, and good bread to his wealthy customers at a fairer price. The baker was rescued by the local militia just in time, and the king was presented in public *pour calmer les esprits*.

Over the next few weeks the women of France increased their protests, culminating in the famous march to Versailles on October 5.

THE POTATO BLIGHT

1845

The first report of the potato blight in Ireland in the English press appeared on this day in the *Gardener's Chronicle and Horticultural Gazette*: "We stop the press with very great regret to announce that the potato murrain has unequivocally declared itself in Ireland. . . . The crops about Dublin are suddenly perishing. . . . Where will Ireland be in the event of a universal potato rot?"

See **August 23** for this paper's first report of the appearance of the blight in Europe.

FOOD & WAR

1642: English Civil War

From the letters of Nehemiah Wharton, a sergeant in Holles's redcoats during the Edgehill campaign:

Northampton, . . . a troop of horse met me, pillage me of all, and robbed me of my very sword, for which cause I told them I would either have my sword or die in the field, commanded my men to charge with bullet, and by divisions to fire upon them, which made them with shame return my sword, and it being towards night I returned to Northampton, threatening revenge upon the base troopers. This night and the day following our company by lot watched the south gate, where I searched every horseman of that troop to the skin, took from them a fat buck, a venison pasty ready baked, but lost my own goods.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1768: Madeira

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks. They had arrived at Funchal, Madeira, where they stayed for five days to replenish the ships' provisions. He remarked on the very old-fashioned way that wine was made on the island.

The people here in general seem to be as idle, or rather uninformed a set as I ever yet saw; all their instruments, even those with which their wine, the only article of trade in the Island is made, are perfectly simple and unimproved. Their method is this: the Grapes are put into a square wooden vessel, of dimensions according to the size of the vineyard to which it belongs, into which the servants get (having taken off their stockings and Jackets) and with their feet and Elbows squeeze out as much of the Juice as they can; the stalks *etc.* are then collected, tied together with a rope and put under a square piece of wood which is pressed down by a Leaver, to the other end of which is fastened a stone that may be raised up at pleasure by a screw; by this way and this only they make their wine, and by this way probably Noah made his when he had newly planted the first vineyard after the general destruction of mankind and their arts; tho it is not impossible that he might have used a better, if he remembered the ways he had seen us'd before the flood.

It was with great difficulty that some (and not as yet all) of them were persuaded not long ago to graft their vines and by this means bring all the fruit of a vineyard to be of one sort, tho before the vine which it produced had been spoiled by different sorts of bad ones which were nevertheless suffered to grow, and taken as much care of as the best, because they added to the quantity of the wine. Yet were they perfectly acquainted with the use of grafting, and constantly practised it on their chestnut trees, by which means they were brought to bear sooner much than they would have done had they been allowed to remain unimproved.

1834: Chile

From Charles Darwin's journal of the voyage of the *Beagle*. He visited the mines on this day and noted the extremely hard labor and poor diet of the workers:

San Fernando. . . . The next morning we rode to the mines. . . . When we arrived at the mine, I was struck by the pale appearance of many of the men, and inquired from Mr. Nixon respecting their condition. The mine is 450 feet deep, and each man brings up about 200 pounds weight of stone. . .

. with this very severe labour, they live entirely on doled beans and bread. They would prefer having bread alone; but their masters, finding that they cannot work so hard upon this, treat them like horses, and make them eat the beans.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1665: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys.

[A]nd in my Lord's coach to Sir W. Hicke's . . . He did give us the meanest dinner—of beef—shoulder and umbles of venison which he takes away from the keeper of the Forest—and a few pigeons; and all in the meanest mannner that ever I did see—to the basest degree.

Pepys is annoyed on two counts here: the dinner is poor, and it is partly at the expense of the keeper of the forest, because, as with gamekeepers, they traditionally received the 'umbles of any deer killed in their area of responsibility.

September 14

THE PIG'S FACE FEAST

England

The tradition of eating “pig's face” (or at least pork chops or sandwiches) on this day in the English Cotswold village of Avening dates back to the eleventh century. The origins of the tradition are not certain. One theory is that Matilda of Flanders, who became the wife of William the Conqueror, had previously been rejected by Brittric, lord of Gloucestershire. The spurned woman had had Brittric imprisoned and executed, but later repented. As an act of contrition, she had a church built on his land. This was completed on Holy Cross Day (September 14), and a celebratory boar's head feast—a standard event in such situations at the time—was held to celebrate. A more prosaic explanation of the Pig's Head Feast is that it is held to celebrate the final capture of a wild boar that had been causing trouble in the village.

In one reported variation of the practice, it was the bell-ringers who were served apple dumplings along with the pig's face.

FOOD & WAR

1946: Soviet Union, Post World War II

The Council of Ministers took the first steps toward ending rationing, with an increase in ration prices of two-and-a-half to three times, and a reduction in commercial prices of between 10 and 20 percent.

On September 27, another decree, "On Economizing in the Consumption of Grain," reduced the number of people entitled to ration cards by almost 30 million, most of whom were in rural areas.

The goal of both measures was to reduce the consumption of bread in the face of the recent bad harvest. The strategies were successful in this regard, as bread sales dropped by 60,000 tons in October and November.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1805: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day Patrick Gass wrote:

[N]one of the hunters killed any thing except 2 or 3 pheasants; on which, without a miracle it was impossible to feed 30 hungry men and upwards, besides some Indians. So Capt. Lewis gave out some portable soup, which he had along, to be used in cases of necessity. Some of the men did not relish this soup, and agreed to kill a colt; which they immediately did, and set about roasting it; and which appeared to me to be good eating.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1665: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys.

I away back again to the Bear at Bridge foot, being full of wind and out of order, and there called for a biscuit and a piece of cheese and a gill of sack—being forced to walk over the Bridge toward the Change, and the plague being all thereabouts. . . . After supper (having eat nothing all day) upon a fine Tench of Mr. Dheldens taking, we to bed.

1776: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde: “Very busy all day with my Barley, did not dine till near 5 in the afternoon, my Harvest Men dined here today, gave them some Beef and some plumb Pudding and as much liquor as they would drink.”

1852: Australia

From the notes of Ellen Clacy, who accompanied her brother to the Goldfields of Victoria in 1852–1853.

[A]t about ten miles from Kyneton, entered the Coliban range, which is thickly wooded. The river itself is about fourteen miles from Kyneton. Here we camped, in the pouring rain. Some of our party walked to the town of Malmsbury, about a mile and a half from our camping place. The town consisted of about three tents, and an inn dignified by the appellation of the “Malmsbury Hotel” . . . is capable of accommodating two hundred people, independent of which there is a large tent, similar to the booths at a fair, about 100 feet long by 30 wide, for the convenience of those who prefer sleeping under cover when the house is full. Being hungry with their walk, our comrades dined here, for which they paid 3s. 6 d. a-piece; ale was 1s. 6d. a glass; brandy 2s. per half glass, or “nobbler;” cheese, 4s. 6d. a pound; bread, 5s. the four-pound loaf; wine, 25s. a bottle.

1937: USA

Harry Truman wrote to his daughter.

Hot Springs, Ark.

My dear Little Big Daughter:

. . . I'm sending you a package of pecans and praelines. Give Natalie and May and Christie some of the candy and give Mamma Truman some of the pecans. She likes 'em very much.

September 15

DINNER AT THE WHITE HOUSE

1959: USA

Russian premier Khrushchev was entertained by President Harry S. Truman at the White House this night. The menu was:

Melon with Prosciutto Ham

Curry Soup

Whole Wheat Melba Toast

Celery Hearts—Queen and Ripe Olives

Molded Crab Louis

Coleslaw in Tomato Basket—Boston Brown Bread Sandwiches

Roast Young Turkey

Roast Corn Bread Dressing and Gravy

Whole Cranberry Sauce—Scalloped Sweet Potatoes and Pineapple

French Green Beans Almondine

Bread Sticks

Tossed Bibb Lettuce, Parmesan, Green Goddess Dressing

Toasted Sesame Crackers

Lime Glacé

Ladyfingers

Nuts—Candies—Coffee

MARE’S MILK

1884: London, England

The *Pall Mall Gazette* mentioned the new health craze for koumiss: “The koumiss cure is growing greatly in popularity. . . . Sometimes patients spend six or seven summers at the koumiss establishments.”

Koumiss (kumis): Strictly speaking, this is fermented mare’s milk. It is a very ancient beverage with low alcohol content, and it remains an important one in Central Asia. The process of fermentation was sometimes carried out by attaching the container of milk and starter to a saddle, the milk then being mixed and fermented as the horse galloped about. In nineteenth-century Europe it became a fashionable panacea, as the article above indicates.

Here is a nineteenth-century English interpretation of the recipe.

To make Koumiss, a valuable Wine of the Tartars

Take of fresh mare’s milk, of one day, any quantity; add to it a sixth part water, and pour the mixture into a wooden vessel; use then, as a ferment, an eighth part of the sourest cow’s milk that can be got; but at any future preparation, a small portion of old koumiss will better answer the purpose of souring. Cover the vessel with a thick cloth, and set it in a place of moderate warmth; leave it at rest twenty-four hours; at the end of which time the milk will have become sour, and a thick substance will be gathered on its top; then, with a stick, made at the lower end in the manner of a churn staff, beat it till the thick substance above-mentioned be blended intimately with the subjacent fluid. In this situation leave it again at rest for twenty-four hours more; after which, pour it into a higher and narrower vessel, resembling a churn, where the agitation must be repeated as before, till the liquor appear to be perfectly homogeneous; and in this state it is

called koumiss; of which the taste ought to be a pleasant mixture of sweet and sour. Agitation must be employed every time before it is used. This wine operates as a cooling antiseptic, an useful stimulant, cordial, and tonic, and may prove a valuable article of nourishment; and it has one excellence, perhaps not the least, that the materials from which it is prepared are cheap, and the mode of preparation simple.

—*The New Family Receipt-book* (1820), by J. Murray.

FOOD & WAR

1917: Britain, WW I

The Potato Order (1917) came into effect on this day. The order gave the government control over the potato trade at every level. The exact provisions were quite detailed, but the most important were that the maximum price of potatoes (other than seed potatoes) was set at £6 10s. per ton, and, as of October 1, every dealer in potatoes had to be registered.

JEFFERSON'S COOK

1793: USA

Thomas Jefferson was preparing to retire from public life and frequent travel and to live permanently at Monticello. In a document signed on this day, Jefferson agreed to grant freedom to his slave and cook, James Hemings, who had accompanied him to France, on condition that he return to Monticello, where he “shall continue until he shall have taught such person as I shall place under him for that purpose to be a good cook, this previous condition being performed, he shall be thereupon made free.” James spent two years at Monticello teaching his younger brother Peter to take over his role. He became a free man on February 5, 1796.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1805: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific

Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day Patrick Gass wrote:

Having breakfasted on colt, we moved on down the river 3 miles, and again took the mountains. In going up, one of the horses fell, and required 8 or 10 men to assist him in getting up again. We continued our march to 2 o'clock when we halted at a spring and dined on portable soup and a handful of parched corn. We then proceeded on our journey over the mountains to a high point, where, it being dark, we were obliged to encamp. There was here no water; but a bank of snow answered as a substitute; and we supped upon soup.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1813: England

The novelist Jane Austen wrote to her sister Cassandra on this day.

Henrietta St.: Wednesday (Sept. 15, 1/2 past 8). Here I am, my dearest Cassandra, seated in the breakfast, dining, sitting-room, beginning with all my might. . . . We had a very good journey, weather and roads excellent. . . . We arrived at a quarter-past four, and were kindly welcomed by the coachman, and then by his master, and then by William, and then by Mrs. Pengird, who all met us before we reached the foot of the stairs. Mde. Bigion was below dressing us a most comfortable dinner of soup, fish, bouillée, partridges, and an apple tart, which we sat down to soon after five, after cleaning and dressing ourselves and feeling that we were most commodiously disposed of. . . . At seven we set off in a coach for the Lyceum; were at home again in about four hours and a half; had soup and wine and water, and then went to our holes.

September 16

BREAKFAST ABOARD THE QUEEN MARY

1948

At Sea. Passengers aboard R.M.S *Queen Mary* were offered the following

breakfast menu on this day:

Breakfast

Thursday, September 16, 1948

Orange Juice—Tomato Juice—Pineapple Juice

Apples—Oranges—Grape Fruit

Compote of Prunes—Apple Purée—Figs in Syrup

Wheatena—Rolled Oats—Oatmeal Porridge

Puffed Rice—Shredded Wheat—Corn Flakes—Bemax

Bran Flakes

Filet of Kingfish, Meunière—Finnan Haddie

Eggs: Fried, Turned, Poached, Boiled or Scrambled

Omelettes (to order): Plain or Mexican

Grilled Tomatoes and Bacon

Bubble and Squeak

COLD: Roast Beef—Roast Chicken

Radishes—Watercrss

Griddle, Buckwheat and Waffle Cakes

Maple and Golden Syrup

Breads: Sultana—Whole Wheat—Vienna—Brioche

Corn—Hovis—Croissants—Vita-Wheat

White and Graham Rolls—Toast—Currant Scones

English Muffins

Preserves—Honey—Marmalade

Teas: Ceylon—China—Indian

Nescafé—Coffee—Chocolate—Sanka Coffee

Instant Postum —Ovaltine—Horlick's Malted Milk

A FUNERAL FEAST

1523: London, England

From the diary of Henry Machin. He described the funeral of Sir William Roche, knight and alderman, the previous day. There was a second service on this day, after which there was a dinner.

[M]y lord mayor, and others, returned to the house of the said Mr Roche, where they dined all, save the livery of this fellowship, which dined in the Draper's Hall, by reason he had given them towards the same vjl xiijs.iiij d. [£6. 8s. 4d] which was bestowed by John Quarles and William Berwyck, stewards for the same, the xvj [16th] day of September, in eight messes of meat, as follows: First, brawn and mustard, boiled capon, swan roast, capon and custard. The second course, pigeons and tarts, bread, wine, ale, and beer. And my lady roche of her gentlynes, sent moreover four gallons of French wine, and also a box of wafers, and a pottell of ipocras.

Hippocras or Ipocras is an ancient beverage made from sweet wine flavored with spices. In medieval times it was taken as a digestive, especially at the end of a feast, along with thin wafers. It was also considered to be a cordial drink—*cordial* coming from the Latin for heart, and hence indicating its supposed value as a tonic.

Here is a recipe for hippocras from an Anglo-Norman manuscript written in 1390.

To Make Hippocras

3 oz. coarse cinnamon, and 3 oz. of ginger; spikenard of Spain, one dwt.:

galingale, cloves gillyflower, long pepper, nutmegs, marjoram, cardamoms, of each 1/4 oz., grains and flowers of Paradise, of each of which 1/2 oz.; make of the whole a powder, &c.

THE POTATO BLIGHT

1845: Britain

The inspector general of Constabulary, a Mr. D. McGregor, responded to a request from Prime Minister Peel for a survey of the state of the Irish potato crop with a strictly confidential circular from the Constabulary Office in Dublin Castle. It began:

Information having reached the Government that the POTATO CROP of the present year has totally failed, from disease, in many districts of this Country, County and Sub-Inspectors of Constabulary are hereby directed to make full and immediate inquiries respecting the state of this Crop in their several Districts, and to report the result of such inquiries without loss of time. . . . These inquiries are not only to be regarded as confidential but they are to be so conducted as to prevent speculation on the possible motives for seeking the information required.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1805: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806:

When we awoke this morning to our great Surprise we were covered with Snow, which had fell about 2 Inches deep the later part of last night, & continues a cold Snowey morning. Capt Clark Shot at a deer but did not kill it. we mended up our mockasons and Set out without any thing to eat, and proceeded on could Scarcely keep the old trail for the Snow. . . . [T]he Snow is now about 4 Inches deep . . . the clouds so low on the Mount that we could not see any distance no way. it appeared as if we have been in the clouds all this day. we all being hungry and nothing to eat except a little portable soup which kept us verry weak, we killed another colt & eat half of

it.

1811: USA

From the journal of Wilson Price Hunt's overland expedition in 1811–1812.

On the 16th (Sept) we frequently encountered snow. . . . We halted beside the Spanish River [Green River]. . . . We were surrounded by mountains in which we found beautiful green meadows where many herds of buffalo graze—a fact the more interesting to us because we had not seen a single one of these animals for several days. I found three different species of gooseberries: the common type with red berries, low bushes, and very spiny stems; a second with excellent yellow berries and non-spiny stems; and a third with dark red berries that taste much like our winter grapes. It is nearly as large and has very spiny stems. I also saw three kinds of currants; one has red berries, large and savory, with bushes eight or nine feet high; another with yellow berries about the size of ordinary currants, and with bushes about four or five feet high; and a third with bright red berries that are almost as sweet as strawberries but are rather insipid. Their bushes are small. (20 miles)

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia.

As we passed the Cycas groves, some of the dry fruit was found and tasted by several of my companions, upon whom it acted like a strong emetic, resembling in this particular the fruit of *Zamia spiralis*, (R. Br.) of New South Wales. The natives, at this season, seemed to live principally on the seeds of *Pandanus spiralis*, (R. Br.) and *Cycas*; but both evidently required much preparation to destroy their deleterious properties. At the deserted camp of the natives, which I visited yesterday, I saw half a cone of the *Pandanus* covered up in hot ashes, large vessels (koolimans) filled with water in which roasted seed-vessels were soaking; seed-vessels which had been soaked, were roasting on the coals, and large quantities of them broken on stones, and deprived of their seeds. This seems to show that, in preparing the fruit, when ripe, for use, it is first baked in hot ashes, then soaked in water to obtain the sweet substance contained between its fibres,

after which it is put on the coals and roasted to render it brittle when it is broken to obtain the kernels.

I also observed that seeds of *Cycas* were cut into very thin slices, about the size of a shilling, and these were spread out carefully on the ground to dry, after which, (as I saw in another camp a few days later) it seemed that the dry slices are put for several days in water, and, after a good soaking, are closely tied up in tea-tree bark to undergo a peculiar process of fermentation.



Cycad

1181: USA

From Alonzo Delano's journals of his overland journey to California.

About noon my stomach admonished me that it was dinner-time, and kindling a fire in the shade of some oaks by the road side, I boiled coffee in

knitting a fire in the shade of some oaks by the road-side, I boiled coffee in my tin cup, from water in my flask, and made a sumptuous meal of my hard bread and jerked venison, with a zest which even Robinson Crusoe might have envied. It was now six miles before water could be obtained. . . . There was not a drop of water in the camp, and the Colonel made an excellent cup of tea from that which I carried in my flask. Yet such was the desire for water, that two of his men each took a pail and walked over the hills two miles to procure some. distance, twenty-five miles.

1833: Argentina

From Charles Darwin's journal of the voyage of the *Beagle*. He was travelling overland from Blanca to Buenos Aires, and on this day ate both puma and ostrich.

To the seventh posta at the foot of the Sierra Tapalguen . . . during the previous night hail as large as small apples, and extremely hard, had fallen with such violence, as to kill the greater number of the wild animals. One of the men had already found thirteen deer (*Cervus campestris*) lying dead. . . . The men believed they had seen about fifteen ostriches (part of one of which we had for dinner); . . . Numbers of smaller birds, as ducks, hawks, and partridges, were killed . . . marvellous how such strong animals as deer could thus have been killed; but I have no doubt, from the evidence I have given, that the story is not in the least exaggerated. . . . Having finished our dinner, of hail-stricken meat, we crossed the Sierra Tapalguen. . . .

We did not reach the posta on the Rio Tapalguen till after it was dark. At supper, from something which was said, I was suddenly struck with horror at thinking that I was eating one of the favourite dishes of the country namely, a half-formed calf, long before its proper time of birth. It turned out to be Puma; the meat is very white and remarkably like veal in taste. Dr. Shaw was laughed at for stating that "the flesh of the lion is in great esteem having no small affinity with veal, both in colour, taste, and flavour." Such certainly is the case with the Puma. The Gauchos differ in their opinion, whether the Jaguar is good eating, but are unanimous in saying that cat is excellent.

1836: Vancouver, Canada

From missionary Narcissa Whitman's journal of her journey in 1836 from New York, across the Rocky Mountains, to Oregon and beyond.

Every day we have something new to see. We went to the stores and found them filled above and below with the cargo of the two ships, all in unbroken bales. They are chiefly Indian goods, and will be sent away this fall to the several different posts of the company in the ship *Neriade*. We have found here every article for comfort and durability that we need, but many articles for convenience and all fancy articles are not here.

Visited the dairy, also, where we found butter and cheese in abundance—saw an improvement in the manner of raising cream. Their pans are an oblong square, quite large but shallow, flaring a little, made of wood and lined with tin. In the center is a hole with a long plug. When the cream has risen they place the pan over a tub or pail, remove the plug, and the milk will run off leaving only the cream in the pan. I think that these must be very convenient in a large dairy. They milk between fifty and sixty cows.

On visiting the mill we did not find it in a high state of improvement. It goes by horse power and has a wire bolt. This seemed a hard way of getting bread, but better so than no bread, or to grind by hand. The company have one at Colville that goes by water, five days ride from Walla Walla, from whence we expect to obtain our flour, potatoes and pork. They have three hundred hogs.

1881: USA

From the fieldwork diary of Alice Cunningham Fletcher, published as *Camping with the Sioux*.

Left Omaha City at 9.45. Up in the AM. at 5.30—A lively breakfast. . . . We made Florence, a queer little hamlet, and drove to the hotel. "Closed up"—was written on a card and pinned to the door. . . . Bye and bye fruit trees, yes, a house must be at hand. . . . We went into the kitchen, ate apples, while Mrs. Smith asked me questions. Where I came from? where going? Had I been to the State Fair? &c. She was busy paring apples. We talked of the weather and she called on some rough men and put up a "heating stove," a new distinction in the grade of stoves. We had dinner—eggs, potatoes, tomatoes, apple sauce and pie, bread and butter and coffee.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1664

London, England. From the diary of Samuel Pepys: “[M]et Mr. Partiger, and he would needs have me to drink a cup of Horseredish ale, which he and a friend of his, troubled with the stone, have been drinking of—which we did.”

Horseradish ale was a popular medicinal beverage and restorative tonic in the seventeenth century.

1777: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde. He had spent the day pumping out his fishpond.

The Ladies and Gentlemen all dined and spent the afternoon with us. I gave them for dinner half a dozen of my own fine Tench (taken out of my Pond in the yard) stewed, a Rump of Beef boiled, and a Goose roasted, and a Pudding. Mrs Howes found great fault with many things especially about stewing the Fish—she could not eat a bit of them with such sauce *etc.*

September 17

A NUTTY BANQUET

1930: Cedar Rapids, Iowa

The Northern Nut Growers Association held their twenty-first annual meeting on this day, after which a banquet was held at the Hotel Montrose. The menu was, in itself, a promotion for their products:

Canape, Montrose

(Dates stuffed with Nuts)

Iced Celery

Mixed Nuts

Queen Olives

Soup, Rothschild

(Garnished with Chestnuts)

Roast Young Capon Stuffed, Hickory Nut Dressing, Jelly

Au Gratin Potatoes

Puree of Chestnuts, Baked

Frozen Fruit & Nut Salad, Cream Nut Dressing

Wafers

Hot Parkerhouse Rolls

Black Walnut Ice Cream

Nut Layer Cake

Coffee

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1895: USA

Henry D. Perky, of Denver, Colorado, was granted Design Patent No. 24,688 for "A Design for a Biscuit." He described his biscuit as

presenting a fibrous interstitial appearance, showing superimposed layers or irregular interlacing threads or filaments which are wound or disposed in such loose relation to each other that the threads or filaments of the inner layers are visible from the surface to a greater or less degree through the interstices of the outer layers.

We know it in its commercial form as Shredded Wheat.

MOVIES & FOOD

1992

The movie *Like Water for Chocolate* was released at the Toronto Film Festival. The film is based on the book of the same name by Laura Esquivel, and is one of the most popular food movies of all time. The tagline is “a feast for the senses.”

EXTREME EATING

1799

Charles Domery (or Domerz) was a Polish soldier who was captured during his service aboard a French vessel in February 1799. Domery was already notorious for his huge and bizarre appetite. He was reputed to have eaten 174 cats during one year, and it was also claimed that during his naval career he was only prevented from eating the severed leg of a comrade by the actions of other crewmen who wrestled it from him.

In the British prison he was given ten times the ration allowance of other prisoners, yet was still hungry and ate the prison cat, and many rats and prison candles. His case was brought to the attention of The Commissioners for taking Care of Sick and Wounded Seamen and for the Care and Treatment of Prisoners of War. The subsequent examination of this man is told in *The Recreative Review, or Eccentricities of Literature and Life*, published in 1822.

The case of Charles Domery is sufficiently attested by Dr. Johnstone, of Somerset Place, in a letter to Dr. Blane, and by other surgeons, French and English, to put it out of all doubt. He ate dogs, cats, rats, mice, grass and candles. By way of experiment, some medical people, on the 17th September, 1799, provided him with whatever he preferred, and this, which in truth is enough to make one sick, was the bill of fare the whole of which he actually devoured in one day, and was perfectly well after, and uncommonly hungry the next morning.

The solid and liquid contents were raw cow's udder, four pounds; raw beef, ten pounds; candles, two pounds; total sixteen pounds; besides five bottles of porter.

After this feast, he danced and smoked his pipe. No insight could be obtained as to his being in any way different from other men, excepting in this instance, besides that of violent perspiration.

TOMATO SOUP CONVERSATION CAKE

1959: USA

Heloise of the *Ask Heloise* radio show explained the provenance of this interesting and briefly fashionable cake.

This recipe came from my mother's column of September 17, 1959. She called the cake Conversation Piece. Here's the recipe for you to give a try, and you'll see that it certainly can start a conversation. This recipe makes one 10-inch square cake.

- 1/2 cup solid shortening
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup chopped nuts
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 (10 1/2 ounce) can tomato soup
- 1 cup raisins
- 1 1/2 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- **Optional ingredients:**
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground nutmeg
- 2 1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground allspice

- 1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
- Conversation Cake Icing (see below)

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Grease a 10-inch square cake pan.

Cream the shortening and sugar in a large bowl. Stir in the tomato soup (undiluted) and then mix in the rest of the ingredients, except the icing, one at a time. Cream well after each addition.

Pour the batter into the prepared pan and bake for 45 minutes.

When cake is done, remove it from the oven. Loosen the edges with a knife. Turn onto cake rack and let cool. Prepare icing and frost the cake.

Conversation Cake Icing

- 1 (3 ounce) package cream cheese; 1 teaspoon vanilla extract; 1 cup confectioners sugar; 1/4 cup chopped nuts

Place the cream cheese in a small bowl and let it soften at room temperature. Add the vanilla and sugar. Mix well. Spread the icing on the cooled cake. Sprinkle it with the chopped nuts.

FOOD FOR THE POOR

1724: England

Matthew Marryot reported on the conditions in a workhouse in Luton, Bedfordshire, on this day:

The Workhouse here is called a House of Maintenance for the Poor, to soften the Appellation of a Workhouse, against which the Poor might be prejudiced.

And there are at present in the House, 10 Men and 10 Women, from 40 to 80 Years old, and 8 Boys, and 13 Girls, from 3 to 12 Years old, making in all 41. . . .

As to Provisions, there is laid in every Week, of Beef, Mutton, or Veal, according to the Seasons of the Year when they are cheapest, so much as serves the whole Family: And, at this time, about 60l. of Beef at 2d. $\frac{1}{4}$ per Pound, 10l. of Cheese at 3d. per Pound, 2l. of Butter at 6d. per Pound, 4 Gal. of Milk at 4d. per Gal. serve a Week.

This being a great Malt Country, they buy very good Table Beer for 2s. 6d. a final Cask of 25 Gallons each; and as to Flower, Bread, Roots, and other Articles, their Bill of Fare is much the same as in other Workhouses.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1819: USA

Alonzo Delano (1809–1874) traveled overland to California in 1849–1851.

Lawson's was on the opposite side of the creek, and a little before evening I went over, and found two or three small adobe buildings, one of which was called by courtesy a store, having a little flour, whisky, and a few groceries for sale. Around the trading post were lounging gangs of naked Indians of both sexes, drunken Mexicans, and weary emigrants, enjoying respite from excessive fatigue in the flowing bowl; and take it all in all, it did not give me a very flattering impression of the morals of the citizens of the first settlement. My first act was to provide for the creature comfort; and purchasing a little beef, bread, sugar and cheese, I returned to the camp, to enjoy a feast to which I had long been a stranger.

The following are the prices current paid for provisions at that time at Lawson's: Flour, per 100 pounds, \$50,00; fresh beef, \$35,00; pork, \$75,00; sugar, \$50,00; cheese, per pound, \$1,50.

1833: Argentina

From Charles Darwin's journal of the voyage of the *Beagle*. He was traveling overland from Bahia Blanca to Buenos Aires on this date.

We followed the course of the Rio Tapalguen, through a very fertile country, to the ninth posta. Tapalguen, itself, or the town of Tapalguen. . . . We were here able to buy some biscuit. I had now been several days

without tasting anything besides meat: I did not at all dislike this new regimen; but I felt as if it would only have agreed with me with hard exercise. I have heard that patients in England, when desired to confine themselves exclusively to an animal diet, even with the hope of life before their eyes, have hardly been able to endure it. Yet the Gaucho in the Pampas, for months together, touches nothing but beef. But they eat, I observe, a very large proportion of fat, which is of a less animalized nature; and they particularly dislike dry meat, such as that of the Agouti.

1881: USA

From the fieldwork diary of Alice Cunningham Fletcher, published as *Camping with the Sioux*.

We started at 7.30 or 8 and made our way northward. . . . The country on to our camping ground was wonderfully fine. . . . About five miles out we camped by the road and kindled our first fire. Had purchased steak, watermelon and oats at Blair, so all were content—ate heartily. The farmer gave us tomatoes. It was nearly two when we started on. Passed through Herman, over mud, deep and black. About 7 we reached Tekama and put up at the Astor House. Tel. from Miss Bowles, ill and not coming, so we paid hotel prices, ate middling fare and slept in dirty sheets.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1853: USA

Henry Thoreau was on his second expedition into the Maine woods.

We breakfasted on tea, hard bread, and ducks. . . . Before the fog had fairly cleared away, we paddled down the stream again, and were soon past the mouth of the Moosehorn. . . . The conspicuous berry-bearing bushes and trees along the shore were the red osier, with its whitish fruit, hobble-bush, mountain-ash, tree-cranberry, choke-cherry, now ripe, alternate cornel, and naked viburnum. Following Joe's example, I ate the fruit of the last, and also of the hobble-bush, but found them rather insipid and seedy. . . . We stopped to fish for trout. . . . So we were compelled to make a fire and get our dinner here, not to lose time. Some dark reddish birds, with grayer females (perhaps purple finches), and myrtle birds in their summer dress

remains (perhaps purple niches), and myrtle-bush in their summer dress, hopped within six or eight feet of us and our smoke. Perhaps they smelled the frying pork.

September 18

FOOD & WAR

1942: Germany, World War II

A decree “Concerning Food Supply for Jews” was issued on this day by the Reich minister for nutrition and agriculture. It stated, in part:

Jews will no longer receive the following foods . . . meat, meat products, eggs, wheat products (cake, white bread, wheat rolls, wheat flour, etc) whole milk fresh skimmed milk, as well as such foods are distributed not on food ration cards issued uniformly throughout the Reich but on local supply certificates or by special announcement of the nutrition offices on extra coupons of the food cards. Jewish children and young people over 10 years of age will receive the bread ration of the normal consumer. Jewish children and young people over 6 years of age will receive the fat ration of the normal consumer, no honey substitute and no cocoa powder, and they will not receive the supplement of marmalade accorded the age classes of 6 to 14 years. Jewish children up to 6 years receive 1/2 liter of fresh skimmed milk daily.

Accordingly no meat, egg or milk cards and no local supply certificates shall be issued to Jews. Jewish children and young people over 10 years of age will receive the bread cards and those over 6 years of age the fat cards of the normal consumer. The bread cards issued to Jews will entitle them to rye flour products only. Jewish children under 6 years of age shall be issued the supply certificate for fresh skimmed milk. “Good for 1/2 liter daily” shall be noted on it.

For the purchase of non-rationed food the Jews are not subject to restrictions as long as these products are available to the Aryan population in sufficient quantities. Ration-free foods which are distributed only from time to time and in limited quantities, such as vegetable and herring salad, fish paste, etc., are not to be given to Jews. The nutrition offices are

authorized to permit Jews to purchase turnips, plain kind of cabbage *etc.*

CHOCOLATE

1758: America

The *New York Gazette* carried an early advertisement for a chocolate-maker.

Chocolate Made and Sold by Peter Swigart, Chocolate Makers, in Bayard-street, opposite Mr. John Livingstone's Store-House; Choice Chocolate at the new current Price.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1805: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day Meriwether Lewis wrote:

Cap Clark set out this morning to go ahead with six hunters. There being no game in these mountains we concluded it would be better for one of us to take the hunters and hurry on to the leavel country a head and there hunt and provide some. . . . We marched 18 miles this day and encamped on the side of a steep mountain; [Near Bald Mountain] we suffered for water this day passing one rivulet only; we wer fortunate in finding water in a steep raviene about 1/2 maile from our camp. This morning we finished the remainder of our last coult. We dined & suped on a skant proportion of portable soupe, a few canesters of which, a little bears oil and about 20 lbs. of candles form our stock of provision. . . . [We] used the snow for cooking.

1811: USA

From the journal of Wilson Price Hunt's overland expedition in 1811–1812.

On the 18th we left the river and, as we trekked to the northwest, we went up a small stream that flows from the mountains. We stopped there to dry enough buffalo meat to last until we reached the banks of the Columbia and other rivers where we hoped to catch fish. While hunting, some of our men

met Indians. . . . They led us to their camp. They belonged, we found, to a tribe of Snake Indians that had come to this district to dry meat. They had a great amount of it, all very fat. They live in skin tents and own many horses. Several among them had never before seen white men and they were very happy about our visit. They fed us and in all made us thoroughly welcome. They had no pelts other than buffalo and a dozen beaver, which we bought; and we urged them to kill more of the beaver. We told them that we would return to their camp to trade with them and they seemed pleased. We bought from them nearly two thousand pounds of dried buffalo meat which, with the more than four thousand that our men had prepared, loaded all our horses but six. (8 miles)

1873: Australia

Major Peter Warburton was on his private expedition to be the first to cross Australia from east to west, and in the region of Mt. Hughes. Several camels were ill, and the explorers were short of food, so a camel was shot although it provided “very poor food, the animal was old and quite worn out.”

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1856: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau.

By boat to Conantum, barberrying.

The barberries are not fairly turned, but I gather them that I may not be anticipated,—a peck of large ones. I strip off a whole row of racemes at one sweep, bending the prickles and getting as few leaves as possible, so getting a handful at once. The racemes appear unusually long this season, and the berries large, though not so thick as I have seen them. I consider myself a dextrous barberry-picker, as if I had been born in the Barberry States. A pair of gloves would be convenient, for, with all my knack, it will be some days before I get all the prickles out of my fingers. I get a full peck from about three bushes.

. . . Gathered just half a bushel of barberries on hill in less than two hours, or three pecks to-day and yesterday in less than three hours. It is singular

that I have so few, if any, competitors. I have the pleasure also of bringing them home in my boat. They will be more valuable this year, since apples and cranberries are scarce. These barberries are more than the apple crop to me, for we shall have them on the table daily all winter, while the two barrels of apples which we lay up will not amount to so much.

Also, what is the pear crop to the huckleberry crop? They make a great ado about their pears, those who get any, but how many families raise or buy a barrel of pears all told? The pear crop is insignificant compared with the huckleberry crop. The one does not concern me, the other does. I do not taste more than six pears annually, and I suspect the majority fare worse than I, but nature heaps the table with berries for six weeks or more. Indeed the apple crop is not so important as the huckleberry crop. Probably the apples consumed in this town do not amount to more than one barrel a family, but what is this to a month or more of huckleberrying for every man, woman, and child, and the birds into the bargain? They are not unprofitable in a pecuniary sense. I hear that some of the inhabitants of Ashby have sold two thousand dollars' worth the past season.

1931

William Ukers, the editor of the *Tea and Coffee Trade Journal* of New York, wrote a letter to Mahatma Gandhiji on this day and asked how his plans for a free India were likely to affect the tea industry. America, he said, was "vitaly interested because we get 56 per cent of our teas from India and Ceylon, of which India supplies nearly half." The reply (not dated) was:

Dear friend,

I thank you for your letter. If and when India comes to her own, it does not follow that the British Indian Tea Estates or any other British interests will be confiscated. On the contrary, every legitimate interest will receive the fullest protection, but the legitimacy of all foreign and other interests will certainly be examined by an impartial Tribunal.

ANNIVERSARY

1709: England

This was the birthday of Dr. Samuel Johnson, the famous writer, lexicographer, and gourmet, and the second most quoted man in the world after William Shakespeare. Johnson was a man who “minded his belly very much,” and his biographer James Boswell recorded many of the meals they shared, along with Johnson’s comments and asides.

Johnson’s birthday is celebrated by members of the Johnson Society with a wreath-laying ceremony at his statue, and then a dinner of his favorite dishes, such as steak and kidney pudding and apple pie.

A man seldom thinks with more earnestness of anything else than he does of his dinner.

Let me smile with the wise and feed with the rich.

If once you find a woman gluttonous, expect from her very little virtue.

A man is in general better pleased when he has a good dinner upon the table than when his wife talks Greek.

September 19

1901: France

Tsar Nicolas II went on a European tour in 1901. On this day he was in Burgundy, where he sat down to the following luncheon menu.

Oeufs brouillés aux Truffles

—

Filets de Sole à la Normande

—

Selle d’Agneau Champenoise

—

Cailles braisées aux Laitues

Jambon de Bayonne Sévigné

—

Canetons de Duclair rôtis Rouennaise

—

Chartreuse de Faisans Périgourdine

Salade Mimosa

—

Coeurs d'Artichauts Provençale

—

Glaces Succès

Gaufrettes

FOOD & WAR

1941: Britain, World War II

The minister of food, Lord Woolton, made a statement about the food situation at the end of the second year of the war.

Lord Woolton . . . said that at the end of the second year of war the food position of the country was good . . . all recent medical reports . . . showed that there had been no deterioration in the health of the nation. . . . Thanks to the Mercantile Marine, we were the only nation which was having its rations increased at the beginning of the third year of war. The Minister appealed to people not to buy goods in the black market, which was “a thorn in our side.” It was no use people getting indignant about rascals who run the black market if they were prepared to buy for themselves the stuff these people sold.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1770: Polynesia

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks.

Savu. By this time the morning was pretty far advanc'd and we, resolving not to go on board and eat salt meat when such a profusion of fresh was continually talkd of, petitiond his majesty that we might have liberty to purchase a small Hog, some rice &c. and employ his subjects to cook them for our dinner. He answerd that if we could eat victuals dressed by his subjects, which he could hardly suppose, he would do himself the honour of entertaining us; we expressd our gratitude and sent immediately on board for liquors. About 5 O'Clock dinner was ready, consisting of 36 dishes or rather baskets containing alternately Rice and Boild Pork, and 3 earthen ware bowls of Soup or rather the Broth in which the Pork had been boild; these were rangd on the floor and matts laid round them for us to set upon. We were now conducted by turns to a hole in the floor near which stood a man with a basket of water in his hand; here we wash'd our hands and then rang'd ourselves in order round the victuals waiting for the King to set down. We were told however that the custom of the countrey was that the entertainer never sets down to meat with his guests, however if we suspected the victuals to be poisoned he would willingly do it; we suspected nothing and therefore desire'd that all things might go as usual; all then sitting down we eat with good appetites, the Prime Minister and My[n]heer Lange partaking with us. Our wine passd briskly about, the Radja alone refusing to drink with us saying that it was wrong for the master of the feast to be in liquor. The pork was excellent, the Rice as good, the broth not bad, the spoons only which were made of leaves were so small that few of us had patience to eat it: every one however made a hearty dinner and as soon as we had done removd, as the custom it seems was to let the Servants and seamen take our Places. These could not dispach all, but when the women came to take away they forcd them to take away with them all the Pork that was left. . . . In the Evening we had intelligence from our trading place that No Buffelloes or hogs had been brought down, a few sheep only, which were taken away before our people who had sent for money could procure it; some few fouls however were bought and a large quantity of a kind of Syrup made from the Juice of the palm tree, which tho infinitely superior to

melasses or treacle sold at a very small price,

1862

Africa. John Hanning Speke, from his *Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile*.

Unyoro: These distant people pay their homage to Kamrasi, though they have six degrees of longitude to travel over. They are, I believe, a portion of the N'yam N'yams—another name for cannibal—whose country Petherick said he entered in 1857–58. Among the other wild legends about this people, it was said that the Wilyanwantu, in making brotherhood, exchanged their blood by drinking at one another's veins; and, in lieu of butter with their porridge, they smear it with the fat of fried human flesh.

Nyam-nyam, or *Niam-Niam* is a name used to refer to the Zande people. The word in the Dinka language means “great eater” but has connotations of cannibalism to Europeans, so can be used pejoratively. Because the word also is onomatopoeic, some suggest that it has given us the phrase “yum-yum.”

1873: Australia

Peter Egerton-Warburton (1813–1889) explored the center of Australia in 1872–1874, and his party became the first to cross the continent from the center to the west, via the Great Sandy Desert. The party only survived the expedition by killing their pack camels for food. On this day it was almost a year since they had left Adelaide.

Happy to say we have no more sick camels this morning. We started so as to reach a smoke we had seen yesterday about ten miles off. Found a dry well, but the country at times very bad. We jerked our camel-meat as well as we could; but it is very poor food; the animal was old and quite worn out. The travelling these dark nights over such bad ground is necessarily very slow; hitherto I have allowed the sand-hills to be my guide; not only on account of the difficulty of crossing them, but also because the smokes we have seen have been mostly a little north of west; I cannot, however, go any farther with them, as they are running more to the north of west, whilst my proper course has a little to the south of it; and thus by and by I should have to cross them nearly at right angles, which would be ruinous.

Editor: It may be as well here to insert the method in which the camel meat was cured, and the animal generally disposed of, for many more than this one were doomed to fall under the knife, and the treatment in every case was precisely similar. The inner portions of the beast were first eaten, not the liver and other dainty parts only, but *all*, every single scrap was greedily devoured, and whenever eating is mentioned, it must be taken *au pied de la lettre*, and not with the loose signification we attach to it in England; to eat a bird meant with the explorer to pluck him and then to eat him *right through* and to eat a camel meant exactly the same thing. No shred was passed over; head, feet, hide, tail, all went into the boiling pot, even the very bones were stewed down for soup first, and then broken for the sake of the marrow they contained. The flesh was cut into thin flat strips and hung upon the bushes to dry in the sun, three days being requisite to effect the process properly. The tough thick hide was cut up and parboiled, the coarse hair was then scraped off with a knife, and the leather-like substance replaced in the pot and stewed until it became like the inside of a carpenter's glue-pot, both to the taste and to the smell. Nourishment there was little or none; but it served to fill up space, and as such was valuable to starving men, who could afford to discard nothing. The head was steadily attacked and soon reduced to a polished skull, tongue, brains, and cheeks all having disappeared; the foot was much esteemed as a delicacy, though a great deal of time was requisite to cook it to perfection. The method of preparing one is as follows:—Light a good fire some time beforehand, and let the wood burn down to bright glowing embers; cut the foot off at the hock, and scrape and singe as much hair off it as time and appetite will permit of. Having done this, stick the end into the glowing coals, burn it for some considerable time, and then, withdrawing it, place it on its side on the ground, and strike the other side smartly with the back of a tomahawk, when, if charred enough, the sole will come off, a large flat slab composed of tough spongy horn; if it refuses to part from the flesh, stuff it into the fire again until it becomes more reasonable. This would seem rather a long process for a hungry man to perform, and the reader doubtless thinks he is now about to reap the reward of his patience, having no further task but to devour the dainty morsel. Not so. Having got the sole off, place the foot in a bucket, and keep it steadily boiling for thirty-six hours; if your fire goes out, or you drop asleep, of course it will require longer; then at last you may

venture to hope that your teeth—if good—will enable you to masticate your long-deferred dinner.

Out of the whole number of camels killed for food by Colonel Warburton not one threw to the surface of the cooking bucket a single particle of fat. Worn out and diseased, they afforded no more nutriment than is found in the bark of a tree, and yet on such wretched stuff the party preserved their lives for many weeks. Poor as it was, it was their all, and without it they must have infallibly perished.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1776: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde: “We breakfasted, dined, supped and slept at Yarmouth. . . . We rode close to the Ocean, the Waves sometimes coming into our Carriages. We returned about 3 o’clock. We had some fine smelts, shoulder of mutton roasted and Tarts.”

1798: Germany

Dorothy Wordsworth was in Hamburg with her brother, the poet William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and John Chester. She wrote:

The first impression that an Englishman receives on entering a Hamburg inn is that of filth and filthy smells. . . . When I returned below I found the party eating cold beef—no cloth spread no vegetables but some bad cucumbers pickled without vinegar. Very good wine at one mark 4 sous the bottle. We had afterwards tea and coffee; the bread good, halfpenny rolls, butter not fresh.

1898: Alaska

A young man called Lynn Smith wrote to his sister Polly from the Klondike goldfields: “We have all eaten pickle, onions, and cauliflowers until our very clothes are sour.”

September 20

DINNER AT SALTAIRE

1853: England

Sir Titus Salt was an English textile manufacturer, philanthropist, and mayor of the town of Bradford. In 1851 he founded the model village of Saltaire to house the workers of his five mills. The village had everything a worker could need, including a hospital, school, and almshouse.

On September 20, 1853, the baron held a great banquet to celebrate the opening of Saltaire as well as his own birthday and the coming of age of his eldest son. The banquet was held in the huge combing shed of one of his mills, and 2,440 workers were his guests. The bill of fare included 40 hindquarters of beef, 40 chines of beef, 120 legs of mutton, 100 dishes of lamb, 40 hams, 40 tongues, 320 plum puddings, 100 dishes of jellies, 50 pigeon pies, 50 dishes of roast chicken, 20 dishes of roast duck, 30 brace of grouse, 30 brace of partridges, 50 dishes of potted meat, and 100 dishes of tartlets. It was estimated that two tons of meat and half a ton of potatoes were served.

This meat-feast was followed by “dessert.” The name comes from the French *deserver* which means “to clear away.” In the mid-nineteenth century, the method of service was still *à la Française*, that is, a great variety of dishes both savory and sweet were placed on the table in a precise hierarchical arrangement for each course, and there were usually two (occasionally three) courses. After all of the food and dishes were cleared, dessert was served—often in a different room. It consisted of fruits, nuts, and sweetmeats. At Titus Salt’s banquet there was a dazzling array of pines, grapes, melons, peaches, nectarines, and apricots.

Later in the century, *service à la Russe* became popular. This is the form of service we are familiar with today, with a progression of dishes served in sequence to individual diners. “Dessert” was progressing at the same time from a selection of post-meal fruit and nuts to the sweet after-dinner course which the term indicates today.

THE JUNGLE

1906: USA

Upton Sinclair's book *The Jungle* was published on this day (his birthday; born 1878). The book revealed the appalling and unsanitary conditions in the meat-packing industry, and triggered a huge outcry on the part of the public.

Sinclair was a passionate socialist and intended his book to expose the awful working conditions of ordinary wage-earners. The book also described in graphic detail the cruel practices of the slaughter houses and the public health problems posed by the lack of cleanliness.

[T]he first cattle of the morning were just making their appearance; and so, with scarcely time to look about him, and none to speak to any one, he fell to work. It was a sweltering day in July, and the place ran with steaming hot blood—one waded in it on the floor. The stench was almost overpowering. . . . In summer the stench of the warm lard would be nauseating. . . .

The shriek was followed by another, louder and yet more agonizing—for once started upon that journey, the hog never came back; at the top of the wheel he was shunted off upon a trolley, and went sailing down the room. And meantime another was swung up, and then another, and another, until there was a double line of them, each dangling by a foot and kicking in frenzy—and squealing. The uproar was appalling, perilous to the eardrums; one feared there was too much sound for the room to hold—that the walls must give way or the ceiling crack. There were high squeals and low squeals, grunts, and wails of agony; there would come a momentary lull, and then a fresh outburst, louder than ever, surging up to a deafening climax. It was too much for some of the visitors—the men would look at each other, laughing nervously, and the women would stand with hands clenched, and the blood rushing to their faces, and the tears starting in their eyes.

There is no doubt that the public uproar over the practices exposed in *The Jungle* contributed significantly to the passage of the Pure Food and Drug Act and the Meat Inspection Act.

On the success of his book, *The Jungle*, Sinclair said: “I aimed at the public’s heart, and by accident I hit it in the stomach.”

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1770: Polynesia

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks:

But what seems to be the genuine natural production of the Island and which they have in the greatest abundance and take the most care of is the Fan Palm or Toddy tree. . . . The excellence of the Palm wine or Toddy which is drawn from this tree makes however ample amends for the poorness of the fruit: this is got by cutting the buds which are to produce flowers soon after their appearance and tying under them a small basket made of the leaves of the same tree, into which the liquor drips and must be collected by people who climb the trees for that purpose every morning and evening. This is the common drink of every one upon the Island and a very pleasant one. It was so to us even at first only rather too sweet; its antescorbutick virtues as the fresh unfermented juice of a tree cannot be doubted. Notwithstanding that this Liquor is the Common drink of both Rich and poor, who in the morning and evening drink nothing else, a much larger quantity is drawn off daily than is sufficient for that use; of this they make a Syrop and a coarse sugar both which are far more agreeable to the taste than they appear to the sight. The Liquor is calld in the Language of the Island *Dua* or *Duac*, the syrup and sugar by one and the same name, *Gula*. It is exactly the same as the Jagara Sugar on the Continent of India and prepard by only boiling down the liquor in earthenware pots till it is sufficiently thick. In appearance it exactly resembles Mollasses or Treacle only it is considerably thicker; in taste however it much excels it having instead of the abominable twang which treacle leaves in the mouth only a little burnt taste which was very agreeable to our palates. The Sugar is of a reddish brown but more clear tasted than any Cane sugar I have tasted which was not refind, resembling mostly brown sugar candy. The syrup seemd to be very wholesome for tho many of our people eat enormous quantities of it it hurt nobody, only gently opning the body and not as we feard bringing on fluxes.

1805: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day William Clark wrote of the kindness of the Nez-Perce of the Columbia River Valley:

[G]ave us a Small piece of Buffalow meat, Some dried Salmon berries & roots in different States, Some round and much like an onion which they call Passheco. quamash the Bread or Cake is called Passheco Sweet, of this they make bread and supe. . . . I find myself verry unwell all the evening from eateing the fish & roots too freely.

And Joseph Whitehouse wrote: “[A] cold frosty morning. we eat a fiew peas & a little greece which was the verry last kind of eatables of any kind we had except a little portable Soup . . . dined Sumptiously on our horse meat.” And John Ordway wrote: “[W]e found a handful or 2 of Indian peas and a little bears oil which we brought with us we finished the last morcil of it and proceeded on half Starved and very weak. Our horses feet gitting Sore.”

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt’s journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia.

We removed our camp to the creek I had found last night, about nine miles northwest from the Robinson. On our way, we saw two flocks of emus, and Spring [one of the dogs] caught one of the birds. According to Charley, who is a native of Bathurst, the emus of this part of the country are much smaller than those of his country, which frequently yield from two to three gallons of oil; but very few of the gulf emus contained fat enough to fry their own liver; and their skin was as dry as that of the native dog. A similar difference has been observed in the bustard, which, at the gulf, rarely weighed more than three pounds and a half; whereas individuals of twenty and twenty-eight pounds weight have been shot to the southward.

I succeeded here in cooking the seeds of Sterculia, which had recently been gathered; first by separating them from their prickly husks, and roasting

them slightly, and then pounding and boiling them for a short time. They produced not only a good beverage with an agreeable flavour, but ate well and appeared to be very nourishing. They contained a great quantity of oil.

A SHOWER OF FISH

1839: India

A shower of small live fish—all of the same kind—was reported at Sunderbunds, twenty miles south of Calcutta. According to Charles Tomlinson, an English army officer who witnessed the event, the fall occurred over a confined area (as is a common pattern with these events):

About two o'clock P.M., of the 20th inst. (September 1839), we had a very smart shower of rain, and with it descended a quantity of live fish, about three inches in length, and all of one kind only. They fell in a straight line on the road from my house to the tank, which is about 40 or 50 yards distant. Those which fell on the hard ground were, as a matter of course, killed from the fall, but those which fell where there was grass sustained no injury; and I picked up a large quantity of them, "alive and kicking," and let them go into my tank. The most strange thing that every stuck me in connection with this event, was, that the fish did not fall helter-skelter, everywhere, or "here and there"; but they fell in a straight line, not more than a cubit in breadth.

There have been many reports of showers of live fish throughout the world since ancient times. It is believed that the fish are caught up in waterspouts or tornadoes, and end up being dumped along with rain, onto land. The fish are not always alive; in reports of some incidents, the fish are in a state of decomposition when they fall to earth. In other cases, the fish are very cold, or even frozen (suggesting sometime in the very cold interior of a storm cloud). In a number of cases it is reported that the fish were collected and subsequently cooked.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1726: At Sea

From *Journal of Occurrences in My Voyage to Philadelphia on board the Berkshire*, by Benjamin Franklin: “The wind is now westerly again, to our great mortification; and we are come to an allowance of bread, two biscuits and a half a day.”

1857: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau.

Beach plums are now perfectly ripe and unexpectedly good, as good as an average cultivated plum. I get a handful, dark-purple with a bloom, as big as a good-sized grape and but little more oblong, about three quarters of an inch broad and a very little longer. I got a handkerchief full of elder-berries, though I am rather late about it, for the birds appear to have greatly thinned the cymes.

September 21

GOOSE FAIRS

From Anglo-Saxon times, this was the traditional day for goose fairs to be held. Other goods were traded too, of course, but the geese were the main attraction. Any surplus animals which could not be over-wintered were sold at autumn fairs, but goose was a traditional dish at Michaelmas, so this was the time when folk bought their supply.

Geese were walked long distances to be sold. In Nottinghamshire for example, over twenty thousand geese reared in the fens of Lincolnshire were walked to Nottingham the fair to be sold for a Michaelmas dish.

THE DEVIL’S NUTTING DAY

September was hazelnut harvesting time in England. The fourteenth of September was called Nutting Day, or the Day of the Holy Nut, in England, and the day when the population took to the woods to forage for the nut. It was believed not only that the hazelnuts were perfectly ripe on this day but also that they had magical properties. September 21, however, was called Devil’s Nutting Day and was a day to avoid picking the nuts, as it was said Satan was out and

about gathering his own supplies, and it would not do to meet him in the woods.

IN THE NEWS

1930: USA

The *New York Times* ran an article on this day on the increasing interest in the soybean.

Large Demand for Soybean is Quickly Created Here:

An Old Oriental Product is Turned to Many Uses in the Western Markets

In less than ten years the soybean, long a stand-by of the Orient, but rather a newcomer to America, has advanced from the position of a minor crop in this country, grown only occasionally as a substitute for clover or some other crop that failed, to one of major importance. . . .

Hitherto it has been the plant as a whole that has found favour and that in the rather limited capacity of a forage for farm animals. But in recent years attention has veered from the stalk to the seed, with the prediction of enormous increases in acreage to meet the newly created and growing demand for soybeans and their wide range of products.

For centuries peoples of the Far East have looked to soybeans to supply not only flavour and relish, but also much of the protein afforded by meats in Western diets. Now their value is beginning to be recognized here, too, especially as a basis of food for persons requiring a low starch diet. Either green or dried, boiled or baked, the beans may be eaten as a vegetable or made into soup, and especial varieties have been developed that are easy to cook. Soybeans are made into cereal beverages used as a substitute for coffee, into sauce, into breakfast foods and into meal and flour, out of which bread, cakes, pastry, and macaroni are made.

SOLDIERS ' HOLIDAY

1856: England

The *News of the World* reported a recent banquet held to honor soldiers returned from the Crimea.

The Soldiers ' Holiday at Portsmouth

The inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood of Portsmouth have given a banquet to some 2,300 soldiers, sailors, and marines, recently returned from the Crimea, in grateful recognition of their memorable services and sufferings due to the recent war. The dinner was a sumptuous one. To be sure, there were no French salads; the beef was not cut into elegant slices; there was no "cold chicking," and no champagne (one bottle between three heroes); but there were the substantial which the English eyes delight to look upon, and English mouths delight to taste; gigantic ribs of beef, and colossal rounds, to be cut from and come again to, until appetite was satisfied; and, by way of luxury, there were venison pasties and game, the latter contributed by the father of Florence Nightingale; and there were hot potatoes, as well as a plentiful supply of bread; and two quarts of good porter formed the specified allowance of each man; though we are assured there was no stint to the supply, and each man had as much beer as he liked; together with two ounces of tobacco.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1853: Britain

William Farmer of Fulham Brewery, Fulham was granted a patent for a method of "Improvements in apparatus for preserving provisions." His process was to place the provisions

in a vessel contained within an outer one holding water. The lid of the first vessel enters the water in the space between the two, and forming a lute or water-joint, which prevents the access of the atmospheric air to the articles contained in the main vessel.

FOOD WRITING

1864: England

George Augustus Sala was a regular writer for the *Daily Telegraph*. He was very interested in food and cooking, and amongst his other writings was *The Thorough Good Cook: A Series of Notes on the Culinary Art and Nine Hundred Recipes* (London, 1895). In his regular work for the *Daily Telegraph* he made mention of orgeat on this day, and the *Oxford English Dictionary* uses it as one of its supporting quotations for its entry on the word.

Orgeat is a sweet beverage known since medieval times. The word is derived from the old Occitan (Southern France) word *orge* for barley, and originally the drink was based on barley. Later, orgeat came to refer to a drink made from almonds, often flavored with orange-flower water. Almond-based orgeat was enormously popular in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in England, and it is popular today in Italy.

To Make Orzat

Take half a dozen sweet Almonds and as many bitter ones, and four Ounces of Melon Seeds cleans'd; beat these in a Mortar, 'till it is reduced to a Pastt, sprinkling it now and then with a few Drops of Water, that it may not oil. When they are thoroughly pounded put in a pound of Sugar, and beat that with your Paste, then put the Paste into a Gallon of Water and let it steep; then put in a coupld of Spoonfuls of Orange Flower-Water, and strain it through a Bag, pressing the gross Substance very hard. Put also a Glass of new Milk into the Bag, then put the Liquor into Bottles, and set it by to cool.

—*The Cooks and Confectioners Dictionary* (1723), by John Nott

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1805: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day Meriwether Lewis wrote:

[W]e killed a few Pheasants, and I killed a prairie wolf (coyote) which together with the ballance of our horse beef and some crawfish which we obtained in the creek enabled us to make one more hearty meal, not knowing where the next was to be found. . . .the hunters all returned

without any thing, I collected a horse load of roots & 3 Sammon . . . at 11 o'clock P. M. arrived at a camp of 5 Squars a boy & 2 Children those people were glad to See us & gave us drid Sammon.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

1726

From the *Journal of Occurences in My Voyage to Philadelphia on Board the Berkshire*, by Benjamin Franklin: “This morning our steward was brought to the geers and whipped, for making an extravagant use of flour in the puddings, and for several other misdemeanors.”

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1798: Germany

Dorothy Wordsworth was in Hamburg with her brother William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and John Chester: “Dined at the ordinary. . . . Soup, boiled meat and stewed vegetables, roasted meat or fowls, sallad, fowls with stewed plumbs, veal with stewed pears, beef with apple sauce.”

1881: USA

From the fieldwork diary of Alice Cunningham Fletcher, published as *Camping with the Sioux*.

En route from Omaha Reservation to Santee Agency. . . . We passed through Homer, bought feed, watermelon and grapes at a Winnebago store. We caught a meat man on the Winnebago Reserve and got beef steak. . . . The fire was built—supper of bacon and coffee.

September 22

THE BANQUET OF THE MAYORS

1900: Paris

The most spectacular event of Paris' *Exposition Universelle* was a huge banquet to which all of the mayors of France and their ladies were invited. The ostensible reasons for the banquet were to celebrate the anniversary of the Proclamation of the Republic in 1792, and to toast the success of the Exposition, but it was also hoped to more closely ally the conservative provinces with the rather more progressive capital city.

Tents were set up covering 35,000 square meters of the Tuileries Gardens to a magnificent meal catered by Maison Potel et Chabot.

The sheer scale of the exercise was staggering, and reporters of the time almost ran out of superlatives in trying to describe the event. Food was prepared in twelve separate kitchens spread over a two-and-a-half-mile radius by almost two thousand workers, and delivered by three thousand waiters—some on bicycles. The whole was coordinated via a state-of-the-art telephone system and a couple of roving automobiles. As for quantities, the following may give some idea of the logistics: the banquet required 66 gallons of mayonnaise, 50,000 bread rolls, 3,500 salt cellars, 700 pots of mustard, 1,500 Camemberts, and 1 ton of sugar for the coffee.

The menu was:

Darne de Saumon glacée parisienne

Filet de boeuf en Bellevue

Pains de canetons de Rouen

Poularde de Bresse rotie

Aspic de Saumon

Ballottine de faisan Saint-Hubert

Salade Potel

Cheeses

Glace Conde

Vins:

Preignac en carafes

Saint-Julien en carafes

Haut Sauternes

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1805: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day Patrick Gass wrote:

This was a fine warm day. About 9 o'clock we continued our route over a ridge about a west course, upon the top of which there is a handsome small prairie; where we met one of our hunters with a supply of roots, berries, and some fish, which he procured from another band of the Flathead nation of Indians [the Nez Perce]. . . . The roots they use are made into a kind of bread; which is good and nourishing, and tastes like that sometimes made of pumpkins.

1836: Vancouver, Canada

From missionary Narcissa Whitman's journal of her journey in 1836 from New York, across the Rocky Mountains, to Oregon and beyond.

I have not given you a description of our eatables here. There is such a variety I know not where to begin. For breakfast we have coffee or cocoa, salt salmon and roast ducks with potatoes. When we have eaten our supply of them, our plates are changed and we make a finish on bread and butter.

For dinner we have a greater variety. First we are always treated to a dish of soup, which is very good. All kinds of vegetables in use are taken, chopped fine, and put into water with a little rice, and boiled to a soup. The tomatoes are a prominent article, and usually some fowl meat, duck or other kind, is cut fine and added. If it has been roasted once it is just as good (so the cook says), and then spiced to the taste. After our soup dishes are removed, then

comes a variety of meats to prove our tastes. After selecting and changing, we change plates and try another if we choose, and so at every new dish have a clean plate. Roast duck is an everyday dish, boiled pork, tripe, and sometimes trotters, fresh salmon or sturgeon-yea, articles too numerous to be mentioned. When these are set aside, a nice pudding or an apple pie is next introduced. After this a water and a muskmelon make their appearance, and last of all cheese, bread or biscuit and butter are produced to complete the whole. But there is one article on the table I have not yet mentioned, and of which I never partake. That is wine. The gentlemen frequently drink toasts to each other, but never give us an opportunity of refusing, for they know that we belong to the Tetotal Society. We have talks about drinking wine, but no one joins our society. They have a Temperance Society here and at Wallamet, formed by Mr. Lee.

Our tea is very plain. Bread and butter, good tea, plenty of milk and sugar.

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia.

On this occasion we made a grand discovery, of which we afterwards profited greatly. A portion of the skin of the bullock was dried, and a certain quantity was added to our soup at night; which we soon found to be not only a great improvement, but to be in itself much preferable to the tasteless meat of our knocked-up bullocks. The stomach was also made use of on this occasion, as our useful dog, Spring, was well provided with emu meat. We had our last pot of tea on the 22nd, and we were now fairly put on dry beef and water.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1663: London, England

From the Diary of Samuel Pepys: "This day Sir W. Batten tells me that Mr Newhouse is dead of eating cowcubbers (cucumbers) of which the other day I heard of another, I think."

There was a general fear of raw food in Pepys's time, which was not entirely

unjustified in view of the unclean water which was used to grow, then wash, produce.

1790: Britain

From the diaries of John Byng, Fifth Viscount Torrington, written during his horseback tours of England and Wales: “*Dover*. Never did I Enter a more dirty, noisy, or more imposing Inn than this York House; for we were charged most exorbitantly, for wine not drinkable, for musty Fowls, and stinking Partridges; never did I leave an Inn with greater Pleasure.”

1819

John Keats wrote in a letter to C. W. Dilke:

Talking of Pleasure, this moment I was writing with one hand and with the other holding to my Mouth a Nectarine—good god, how fine. It went down soft, pulpy, slushy, oozy—all its delicious embonpoint melted down my throat like large beatified Strawberry. I shall certainly breed.

1856: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau: “A rainy day. Tried some pennyroyal tea, but found it too medicinal for my taste. Yet I collect these herbs, biding the time when their use shall be discovered.”

1862: Canada

Joseph T. Halfpenny left his home and family during the Gold Rush in the Northwest of America. He wrote home to his family and friends on this day:

Green Lake B.C., Dear Friends,

I gladley imbrace another oportunity of sending you a fiew lines hoping thay may one day reach you. . . . We had nothing for 2 weeks but Beef some eat horseflesh some eat skunk porcupine or any thing thay could get. Had it not been for the Indians many would die of hunger (illegible). Hankerchiefs for fish I thank god I have not yet known yet what it is to be

hungry yet when I [illegible] though I have paid 8 cents per lb for flour 90 c. for bacon beans 75 salt 1\$ rice 75 suger 90 thea 3\$. Tobac 3\$ to 3-50 to this (illegible) I have paid no attention for I have not yet commenced to use it nor does not intend to. This is at caraboo further down the Fraiser I have paid \$1-50 for each meal it has been \$3 in the spring it is now (illegible) cheap. The men from canada flocked hear in the spring run away down to Victoria an some home in conequense of the price of provisions.

1881: USA

From the fieldwork diary of Alice Cunningham Fletcher, published as *Camping with the Sioux*.

Breakfast of flapjack and bacon. I ate coffee and crackers and an apple. . . . We all ate a hearty supper of soup and coffee, went to bed a little after eight. . . . The soup pot was put on for an extra boil on the fire outside while S. and I got up on our knees and dressed.

The night before when we finished our supper it was clear that our one kettle could not be spared to heat dish water for it had still a goodly portion of soup which we needed for breakfast so we each placed our tin cups and plates beside our beds to know them apart and have them ready for the breakfast.

September 23

THE FIRE KING

1829: London, England

M. Chabert, the famous “Fire King,” accepted—and won—a fifty pound wager on his fire-resisting ability before a London audience. His final feat was to spend five minutes, dressed in a “coarse woollen” outfit, in an oven heated to 380 degrees. He survived the experience, the only physical response appearing to be the elevation of his pulse rate to 168 beats a minute. The two dishes of beefsteaks which went into the oven with him were cooked to perfection.

FOOD & THE LAW

1363: England

A sumptuary law, the *Statutum De Cibariis Utendis* was promulgated at the *magnum consilium* held at Nottingham on this day. The act attempted to regulate the number of courses and the types of food that various classes of persons could eat at a meal. For example, servants of gentlemen, merchants, and “artificers” should have only one meal of flesh or fish in the day, and their other food should consist of milk, butter, and cheese. No man was to have more than two courses at dinner, nor more than two kinds of meat, with potage in each course, “except on the principal feasts of the year” (eighteen days of the year) when “every man may be served with courses at the utmost . . . three.”

Sumptuary laws have always been virtually impossible to enforce, and this one was no exception, and in fact was almost immediately repealed.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

387: England

The records of the City of London described the consequences to a baker of defrauding his customers by a most ingenious method. In 1387, September 21 was a Monday, so the “Wednesday next” was September 23.

On Wednesday next after the Feast of St. Matthew the Apostle [21 September] . . . Robert Porter, servant of John Gibbe, baker of Stratforde, was brought here, into the Guildhall of London, before Nicholas Extone, mayor . . . and questioned for that, when the same Mayor on that day went into Chepe, to make assay of bread, according to the custom of the City, he, the said Robert, knowing that the bread of his master, in a certain cart there, was not of full weight, took a penny loaf, and in it falsely and fraudulently inserted a piece of iron . . . with intent to make the said loaf weigh more, in deceit of the people *etc.*

Wherefore, enquiry was made of the same Robert, how he would acquit himself thereof; upon which, he acknowledged that he had done in a manner aforesaid. And for his said falsity and deceit, it was adjudged that he should be taken from thence to Cornhulle, and be put on the pillory there, to remain upon the same for one hour of the day, the said loaf and piece of iron being hung about his neck. And precept was given to the

Sheriffs, to have the reason for such punishment publicly proclaimed.

FOOD & WAR

1940: France, World War II

New ration allowances were announced on this day. The amounts were to be 350 grams of bread, 300 grams of sugar, 50 grams of cheese, and 360 grams of meat per day, plus 100 grams of fat per week.

RECIPE OF THE DAY

1751: America

The *Boston Evening Post* gave a rhyming recipe for chowder on this day. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*, this is the first known use of the word in print. *Chowder* is presumed to derive from the French *Chaudière*, for pot. The *OED* defines chowder as “A dish made of fresh fish (esp. cod) or clams, stewed with slices of pork or bacon, onions, and biscuit. Cider and champagne are sometimes added.”

Directions for Making a Chowder

First lay some Onions to keep the Pork from burning,

Because in Chowder there can be no turning;

Then lay some Pork in Slices very thin,

Thus you in Chowder always must begin.

Next lay some Fish cut crossways very nice

Then season well with Pepper, Salt, and Spice;

Parsley, Sweet-Marjoram, Savory and Thyme;

Then Biscuit next which must be soak'd some Time.

Thus your Foundation laid, you will be able
To raise a Chouder, high as Tower of Babel;
For by repeating o're the Same again,
You may make Chouder for a thousand Men.
Last Bottle of Claret, with Water eno' to smother 'em,
You'll have a Mess which some call Omnium gather 'em

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769: Polynesia

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks.

In search of the Southern Continent. Dr Solander has been unwell for some days so today I open'd Dr Hulme's Essence of Lemon Juice, Mr Monkhouse having prescrib'd it for him, which prov'd perfectly good, little if at all inferior in taste to fresh lemon juice. We also today made a pye of the North American apples which Dr Fothergill gave me, which prov'd very good, if not quite equal to the apple pyes which our freinds in England are now eating, good enough to please us who have been so long depriv'd of the fruits of our native Countrey. In the main however we are very well off for refreshments and provisions of most species: our ships *beef* and *Pork* are excellent as are the *peas*; the *flour* and *oatmeal* which have at some times fail'd us are at present and have in general been very good. Our *water* is as sweet and has rather more spirit than it had when drank out of the river at Otahite. Our *bread* indeed is but indifferent, occasion'd by the quantity of Vermin that are in it, I have often seen hundreds nay thousands shaken out of a single bisket. We in the Cabbin have however an easy remedy for this by baking it in an oven, not too hot, which makes them all walk off, but this cannot be allow'd to the private people who must find the taste of these animals very disagreeable, as they every one taste as strong as mustard or rather spirits of hartshorn. They are of 5 kinds, 3 *Tenebrios*, 1 *Ptinus* and the *Phalangium cancroides*; this last is however scarce in the common bread but was vastly plentyfull in white Deal bisket as long as we had any

left.

Wheat was allowd to the ships company which has been boild for their breakfasts 2 or 3 times a week in the same manner as firmity is made; this has I beleive been a very usefull refreshment to them as well as an agreable food, which myself and most of the officers in the ship have constantly breakfasted upon in the cold weather; the grain was originaly of a good quality and has kept without the least damage. This however cannot be said of the *Malt* of which we have plainly had two kinds, one very good but that has been some time ago us'd; that that is at present in use is good for nothing at all, it has been originaly of a bad light grain and so little care has been taken in the making of it that the tails are left in with innumerable other kinds of Dirt; add to all this that it has been damp'd on board the ship so that with all the care that can be usd it will scarce give a tincture to water. *Portable Soup* is very good, it has now and then requird an airing which has hinderd it from moulding. *Sour Crout* is as good as ever and I have not the least doubt of its remaining so.

So much for the Ships Company. We ourselves are hardly as well of as them; our live stock consists of 17 Sheep, 4 or 5 fowls, as many S. Sea hogs, 4 or 5 Muscovy ducks, an English boar and sow with a litter of piggs; in the use of these we are rather sparing as the time of our Getting a supply is rather precarious. Salt Stock we have nothing worth mentioning except a kind of Salt Beef which was put up by one *Mellish* a butcher at New Crane Stairs, which is by much the best salt meat I have ever tasted, and Our Salted Cabbage, which is now as good as it was then.

Our Malt liquors have answerd extreemly well: we have now both small beer and Porter upon tap as good as I ever drank them, especialy the latter which was bought of *Sam. & Jno. Curtiss* at Wapping New Stairs. The Small beer had some art usd to make it keep, it was bought of *Bruff & Taylor* in Hog Lane near St Giles's. Our wine I cannot say much for tho I beleive it to be good in its nature, we have not a glass fine these many months I beleive cheifly owing to the Carelessness or ignorance of the Steward.

1805: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific

Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day Patrick Gass wrote:

The morning was warm and pleasant. We stayed here some time to procure provisions from the natives, for which we gave them in exchange a number of small articles. The provisions which we got consisted of roots, bread and fish. Their bread is made of roots which they call comas, and which resemble onions in shape, but are of a sweet taste. This bread is manufactured by steaming, pounding and baking the roots on a kiln they have for the purpose.

And John Ordway wrote: “a fair morning. we purchased considerable of Sammon and commass roots from the natives. these Savages are now laying up food for the winter and in the Spring they are going over on the medicine River and Missourie River to hunt the buffalo.”

1835: Galapagos

From Charles Darwin’s journal of the voyage of the *Beagle*.

The *Beagle* proceeded to Charles Island. This archipelago has long been frequented, first by the bucaniers, and latterly by whalers, but it is only within the last six years, that a small colony has been established here. The inhabitants are between two and three hundred in number. . . . The inhabitants, although complaining of poverty, obtain, without much trouble, the means of subsistence. In the woods there are many wild pigs and goats; but the staple article of animal food is supplied by the tortoises. Their numbers have of course been greatly reduced in this island, but the people yet count on two days’ hunting giving them food for the rest of the week.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1773: Scotland

From James Boswell’s *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson*.

[Y]et, he added, “any of us would kell [kill] a cow, rather than not have beef”—I said we could not.—“Yes, (said he) anyone may. The business of a butcher is a trade indeed, that is to say, there is an apprenticeship served to it; but it may be learned in a month.”

1836

A letter written by Don Manuel Martínez Escudero to Don Francisco Escalera is the first known written reference to the ring-shaped cakes known as *Roscas de Loja*.

[B]ut regarding the cakes known as *Roscas de Loja*, I have had them made to send you a basket when the courier Calle goes there, and, then, I will send you what you asked for [the recipe], as they are prepared in several ways but, in my opinion, the main thing is the oven, since the recipe has been taken to different towns and they were not able to make them well.

1843: USA

From the *American Journals* of Nathaniel Hawthorne.

I have gathered the two last of our summer-squashes to-day. They have lasted ever since the 18th of July, and have numbered fifty-eight edible ones, of excellent quality. Last Wednesday, I think, I harvested our winter-squashes, sixty-three in number, and mostly of fine size. Our last series of green corn, planted about the 1st of July, was good for eating two or three days ago. We still have beans; and our tomatoes, though backward, supply us with a dish every day or two. My potato-crop promises well; and, on the whole, my first independent experiment of agriculture is quite a successful one.

1881: USA

From the fieldwork diary of Alice Cunningham Fletcher, published as *Camping with the Sioux*.

A glowing sky greeted me as I came out of the tent into the damp morning air—it was not yet six a.m. After performing some portion of my civilized toilet, the kettle of soup was brought in and placed on the ashes of last night's fire and we sat on one rolled up comforter, each where he slept and ate with a relish. Suddenly the recollection of my usual life came over me and I burst out laughing, startling the tent in the midst of the somewhat serious matter appeasing our door appetites. I was forced to explain but I did not tell all. "Ave kept something to yourself." Mr. T. said. "It's enough

to kill a fellow to live as you do east. Two hours at dinner!" "That's pleasant," I suggested. "No strong man could stand that thing, all of the men are thin, pale, miserable chaps. I could whip half a dozen of them." After a minute he added, "there's Mr. F. and Mr. —, look at em! They do a great amount of brain work, there's more than one sort of strength, you know." "Yes, but they all eat raw meat east." S. translated to Wajapa who looked at me and laughed. I cast an incredulous glance toward Mr. T.

Indians are great meat eaters, but eat it very well done, care little for fruit. . . We sat in the shade of the wagon, while Wajapa made a fire out of bits of wood and dried weeds, off on the side of the creek. We had our meat warmed up, drank our coffee and ate our bread. . . . A supper of fried potatoes, hard boiled eggs and black coffee and biscuit partaken of with a relish made us feel fine.

September 24

SCHWENKFELDER THANKSGIVING

1733: Pennsylvania

The Schwenkenfelders were an Anabaptist sect that arose in Germany during the Reformation. A group of one hundred seventy Schwenkenfelders arrived in Pennsylvania on September 22, 1733. The following day they swore an oath of allegiance to King George III, and the day after that they held a small ceremony to give thanks for their safe arrival to a place of freedom and religious tolerance. Their descendants still celebrate the day with the same simple meal of bread, butter, apple butter, and cider that was eaten in 1733.

PRODUCT PROMOTION

1897: England

Buyers of the *Daily Telegraph* on September 24, 1897, received, upon showing the newspaper to any one of the grocers on the list printed within, a sample of cocoa and a penny stamp to pay for the paper.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1805: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day Joseph Whitehouse wrote:

[A] clear pleasant morning. we went out eairly a hunting our horses, which were Scatered all over the plain. . . . Saw a number of Squaws digging the wild potatoes in the plains. . . .Several of the men Sick, by eating hearty of the Sweet food and Sammon. . . . The hunters joined us with 4 Deer & 2 Sammon which they had killed.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1665: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys.

And there, after breakfast, one of our watermen told us he had heard of a bargain of Cloves for us. And we went to a blind alehouse at the end of the town, to a couple of wretched, dirty seamen, who, poor wretches, had got together about 37 lb. of Cloves and 10 lb. of Nuttmeggs. And we bought all of them—the first at 5s. 6d. per lb. and the latter at 4s.—and paid them in gold.

1728: America

From the diary of William Byrd of Westover, Virginia.

My friend, Mr. Chiswell, made me reparation for the robbery of his servant, by filling my bottle again with good brandy. It being Sunday, I made a motion for going to church, to see the growth of the parish, but unluckily the sermon happened to be at the chapel, which was too far off. I was unwilling to tire my friend with any farther discourse upon iron, and therefore turned the conversation to other subjects. And talking of management, he let me into two secrets worth remembering. He said the quickest way in the world to stop the fermentation of any liquor was to keep

a lighted match of brimstone under the cask for some time. This is useful in so warm a country as this, where cider is apt to work itself off both of its strength and sweetness. The other secret was to keep weevils out of wheat and other grain. You have nothing to do, said he, but to put a bag of pepper into every heap, or cask, which those insects have such an antipathy to that they will not approach it. These receipts he gave me, not upon report, but upon his own repeated experience. He farther told me he had brewed as good ale of malt made of Indian corn as ever he tasted; all the objection was, he could neither by art, or standing, ever bring it to be fine in the cask. The quantity of corn he employed in brewing a cask of forty gallons was two bushels and a half, which made it very strong and pleasant. We had a haunch of venison for dinner, as fat and well tasted as if it had come out of Richmond park. In these upper parts of the country the deer are in better case than below, though I believe the buck which gave us so good a dinner had eaten out his value in peas, which will make deer exceedingly fat

1770: England

Benjamin Franklin was living in Craven Street in London at this time. His letters home were in the form of a satirical newspaper called the *Craven Street Gazette*. He referred to himself as Dr. Fatsides, or “the Great Person” (see **September 25**).

We are credibly informed, that the great Person dined this Day with the Club at the Cat-and-Bagpipes in the City, on cold Round of boil'd Beef. This, it seems, he was under some Necessity of Doing (tho' he rather dislikes Beef) because truly the Ministers were to be all abroad somewhere to dine on hot roast Venison. It is thought that if the Queen had been at home, he would not have been so slighted. And tho' he shows outwardly no Marks of Dissatisfaction, it is suspected that he begins to wish for her Majesty's Return. It is currently reported, that poor Nanny had nothing for Dinner in the Kitchen, for herself and Puss, but the Scrapings of the Bones of Saturday's Mutton.

1790: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde.

Nancy (*his niece*) was taken very ill this Afternoon with a pain within her,

blown up so as if poisoned, attended with a vomiting. I supposed it proceeded in great measure from what she eat at Dinner and after. She eat for Dinner some boiled Beef, rather fat and salt, a good deal of a nice rost duck, and a plenty of boiled Damson Pudding. After Dinner by way of Desert, she eat some green-gage Plumbs, some Figgs, and Rasberries and Cream. I desired her to drink a good half pint glass of warm Rum and Water which she did and soon was a little better—for Supper she had Water-gruel with a Couple of small Tablespoonsfuls of Rum in it, and going to bed I gave her a good dose of Rhubarb and Ginger. She was much better before she went to bed.

1849: At Sea

From the “*Memorandum*” of Elizabeth Millar Purdie, wife of the ship’s surgeon, on the voyage of the *Mooltan* from Greenock, Scotland, to Port Chalmers, Otago, New Zealand.

Passing between Tenerife and Gomera—Monday—have been thirteen days at sea. . . . We have all better appetites than at home. Margt may be seen eating pork to breakfast and that after having had some porridge—The provisions we have are very good—except the potatoes—these were excellent at first, but now are spoiling every day. Great disappointment is felt at no fowls or eggs having been put on board—the ladies and children would have been much better of them.

1852: Australia

From the diary of Ellen Clacy, who accompanied her brother to the Goldfields of Victoria in 1852–1823.

Early this morning our late travelling companion, Joe, made his appearance with a sack (full of bran, he said) on his shoulders. After a little confidential talk with William, he left the sack in our tent, as he had no other safe place to stow it away in till the bran was sold. This gave rise to no suspicion, and in the excitement of digging was quite forgotten.

About noon I contrived to have a damper and a large joint of baked mutton ready for the “day labourers,” as they styled themselves. The mutton was baked in a large camp oven suspended from three iron bars, which were

fixed in the ground in the form of a triangle, about a yard apart, and were joined together at the top, at which part the oven was hung over a wood fire. This grand cooking machine was, of course, outside the tent.

Sometimes I have seen a joint of meat catch fire in one of these ovens, and it is difficult to extinguish it before the fat has burnt itself away, when the meat looks like a cinder.

Our butcher would not let us have less than half a sheep at a time, for which we paid 8s. I was not good housekeeper enough to know how much it weighed, but the meat was very good. Flour was then a shilling a pound, or two hundred pounds weight for nine pounds in money. Sugar was 1s. 6d., and tea 3s. 6d. Fortunately we were well provided with these three latter articles.

The hungry diggers did ample justice to the dinner I had provided for them. They brought home a tin-dish full of surface soil, which in . . . the course of the afternoon I attempted to wash.

Tin-dish-washing is difficult to describe. It requires a watchful eye and a skilful hand; it is the most mysterious department of the gold-digging business. The tin dish (which, of course, is round) is generally about eighteen inches across the top, and twelve across the bottom, with sloping sides of three or four inches deep. The one I used was rather smaller. Into it I placed about half the "dirt"—digger's technical term for earth, or soil—that they had brought, filled the dish up with water, and then with a thick stick commenced making it into a batter; this was a most necessary commencement, as the soil was of a very stiff clay. I then let this batter—I know no name more appropriate for it—settle, and carefully poured off the water at the top. I now added some clean water, and repeated the operation of mixing it up; and after doing this several times, the "dirt," of course, gradually diminishing, I was overjoyed to see a few bright specks, which I carefully picked out, and with renewed energy continued this by no means elegant work. Before the party returned to tea I had washed out all the stuff, and procured from it nearly two pennyweights of gold-dust, worth about 6s. or 7s.

Tin-dish-washing is generally done beside a stream, and it is astonishing how large a quantity of "dirt" those who have the knack of doing it well and quickly can knock off in the course of the day. To do this, however, requires great manual dexterity, and much gold is lost by careless washing

requires great manual dexterity, and much gold is lost by careless washing. A man once extracted ten pounds weight of the precious metal from a heap of soil which his mate had washed too hurriedly.

1881: USA

From the fieldwork diary of Alice Cunningham Fletcher, published as *Camping with the Sioux*.

I went to the house near by to purchase eggs and bacon, eight cents per dozen. Eggs I got but not the other. A slender girl answered my knock and said she would call the lady of the house. She came, a good natured Irish woman with broad brogue, far less lady-like than my Jane or Jennie. I bought the eggs, She put them in a sack. I said it was too heavy and the road slippery with mud, I might break it. . . . At noon we pulled up at camp. Road bad, lost our way, ruts. Wajapa rides ahead, buying bread, butter and milk at a log house near by, where dirt and children were equally plenty. Germans. Wajapa gathered wood by the creek and brought a steak which has been sawed by kavers. We had scrambled eggs, fried potatoes and coffee, a jolly good dinner and by 2.30 were off. . . . We had supper of hard boiled eggs, coffee and pancakes.

September 25

FOOD IN SPACE

1997

NASA launched the shuttle *Atlantis*, which carried more than twenty pounds of tomato seeds. They spent two weeks in deep space, after which they were distributed to schools throughout America. Students planted the seeds and reported on the development of the plants. The project was part of the MARS Outreach Program.

FOOD & WAR

1939: Germany, World War II

Food rationing began on this day.

Ration cards of various colours had been distributed over the previous week: bread cards were red, fat cards yellow, milk cards green, meat cards blue, sugar cards white, soap cards brown. Another ration card was for other starchy foods such as cornflour, semolina, oatmeal, and sago, and also coffee.

Manual workers received larger allowances, but the normal weekly ration of bread was 2,400 grams, or 1,900 grams plus 375 grams of flour, of fat (butter, lard, margarine, cocoa butter, olive oil, cheese, or bacon) 80 grams a week. Some foods remained unrationed: fresh fruit and vegetables, fish and skimmed milk.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

2012: Russia

The country's consumer-rights watchdog, *Rospotrebnadzor*, ordered that the importation and use of Monsanto's genetically modified corn (NK603 strain) be suspended. The action was taken on the basis of a study conducted by the University of Caen, in France, which appeared to show that rats fed the corn over a two-year period developed more cancers than the control group.

FOOD CERTIFICATION

2008

Roquefort cheese was granted Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) status on this day.

To qualify as *Roquefort*, the cheese must be made from milk of a specific breed of sheep, infected with spores of the fungus *Penicillium roqueforti*, and matured in the natural caves near the town of Roquefort-sur-Soulzon in the Aveyron region of France.

HUNGER STRIKE

1917: Ireland

Thomas Ashe died on this day in Mountjoy prison. The leader of the Irish Republican Brotherhood and twenty-nine others had been on a hunger strike, hoping to progress their claim of prisoner-of-war status. Ashe died following an attempt by the authorities to force feed him.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1805: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day Patrick Gass wrote: “Our hunters also came in, and had killed nothing but a small panther (*Mountain lion, Felis concolor*) and a pheasant.”

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt’s journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia. The party tried many different seeds as coffee substitutes during the expedition.

The bean of the Mackenzie grew plentifully along the river, and was covered with ripe seeds. In the morning of the 25th, I sent John and Brown to collect as many of them as they could, for coffee. . . . On our return, we ran down an emu, the stomach of which was full of the fruit of the little Severn tree. The meat of the whole body was so exceedingly bitter, that I could scarcely eat it. Brown and John had returned with a good supply of beans, and of the large eatable roots of a *Convolvulus* growing on the plains. The former allowed us again a pot of coffee at luncheon for the next three weeks. This coffee had at first a relaxing effect, but we soon became accustomed to it, and enjoyed it even to the grounds themselves.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1660: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys. He had his first taste of tea: “[A]nd afterwards

did send for a Cupp of Tee (a China drink of which I had never drank before).” Tea had only been advertised in England for the first time two years previous to Pepys’ (September 6, 1658); see also entry for June 20 (1667).

1751: England

Henry Purefoy wrote to Benjamin Rose of Dedington, Oxfordshire, to enquire about some pantry items: “I understand from the People of Astrop that you sell pickled mushrooms, so desire a line or two from you to let mee know the price you sell ’em at, & whether by the Quart bottle or in a Pan & when you will have any ready for sale.”

1770: England

Benjamin Franklin was living in Craven Street, and writing his regular missives from there. He refers to himself as the “great person.”

The Publick may be assured, that this Morning a certain great Person was ask’d very complaisantly by the Mistress of the Houshold, if he would chuse to have the Blade Bone of Saturday’s Mutton that had been kept for his Dinner to Day, broil’d or cold? He answer’d gravely, If there is any Flesh on it, it may be broil’d; if not, it may as well be cold. Orders were accordingly given for broiling it. But when it came to Table, there was indeed so very little Flesh, or rather none at all (Puss having din’d on it yesterday after Nanny) that if our new Administration had been as good Oeconomists as they would be thought, the Expence of Broiling might well have been sav’d to the Publick, and carried to the Sinking Fund. It is assured the great Person bears all with infinite Patience. But the Nation is astonish’d at the insolent Presumption that dares treat so much Mildness in so cruel a manner.

A terrible Accident had like to have happened this Afternoon at Tea. The Boiler was set too near the End of the little square Table. The first Ministress was sitting at one End of the Table to administer the Tea; the great Person was about to sit down at the other End where the Boiler stood. By a sudden Motion, the Lady gave the Table a Tilt. Had it gone over, the great Person must have been scalded; perhaps to Death. Various are the Surmises and Observations on this Occasion. The Godly say, it would have been a just Judgment on him for preventing by his Laziness the Family’s

seen a just judgment on him, for preventing by his Laziness, the Family's going to Church last Sunday. The Opposition do not stick to insinuate that there was a Design to scald him, prevented only by his quick Catching the Table. The Friends of the Ministry give out, that he carelessly jogg'd the Table himself, and would have been inevitably scalded had not the Ministress sav'd him. It is hard for the Publick to come at the Truth in these Cases.

1773: Scotland

From James Boswell's *The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson*.

When one bowl of punch was finished, I rose, and was near the door, in my way up stairs to bed; but Corrichatachin said, it was the first time Col had been in his house, and he should have his bowl;—and would I not join in drinking it? . . . A third bowl was soon mad, and that too was finished. We were cordial, and merry to a high degree; but of what passed I have no recollection, with any accuracy. . . . It was five in the morning when I got to bed.

1785: Paris

Thomas Jefferson wrote to his wife, Abigail, on this day.

I fancy it must be the quantity of animal food eaten by the English which renders their character insusceptible of civilisation. I suspect it is in their kitchens and not in their churches that their reformation must be worked, and that Missionaries of that description from hence would avail more than those who should endeavor to tame them by precepts of religion or philosophy.

1841: USA

From Nathaniel Hawthorne's *American Journals*.

I had rather a pleasant walk to a distant meadow a day or two ago, and we found white and purple grapes in great abundance, ripe, and gushing with rich, pure juice when the hand pressed the clusters. Did you know what

treasures of wild grapes there are in this land? If we dwell here, we will make our own wine.

September 26

DISH OF THE DAY

1991: USA

The Golden Gate casino in Las Vegas celebrated the sale of 25 million servings of its famous shrimp cocktail. The four mayors of the city who had been in office over the thirty-two years were present at the event.

The casino began selling the all-shrimp (no lettuce) cocktail in its six-ounce, tulip-shaped glass at 99 cents; it is now still only \$1.99, a low price no doubt made possible in part by economies of scale—the casino going through four thousand pounds of shrimp a week.

Shellfish with a ketchup-type sauce has been an American favorite since the late nineteenth century. Oysters seem to have been the first to be served this way, cynics suggesting that this was a method of disguising less than perfectly fresh seafood. Humans, however, seem to have enjoyed spicy food for thousands of years, so this is not likely to have been the only motivation for the dish. As “shrimp sauce,” there are a few references to the dish in the 1920s, but it burst into popularity in America in the late 1940s and 1950s.

Here is a recipe for the sauce, from *The Meriden Daily Journal*, April 9, 1936.

Cocktail Sauce

Two tablespoons tomato catsup, 1 tablespoon prepared horseradish, 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce, 1 tablespoon vinegar, 1 tablespoon lemon juice, half teaspoon minced onion, half teaspoon salt, few drops Tabasco sauce.

FOOD & WAR

1953: Britain, Post–World War II

Sugar was taken off the ration at midnight on this day, years after the end of the war. Rationing had begun on January 8, 1940, and although the exact goods and amounts rationed fluctuated over the years, it was in force for over thirteen years. The de-rationing of sugar had been made possible by the purchase of a million tons of sugar from Cuba.

ANNIVERSARY

1774: Leominster, Massachusetts

This was the birthday of John Chapman, popularly known as “Johnny Appleseed.”

Chapman became a legend in his own lifetime. He was an orchardist and a deeply religious, perhaps slightly eccentric, man who took up a nomadic life as a missionary, living in the rough, in the early 1800s. He did not, as is popularly believed, simply scatter apple seeds wherever he went, but established small nurseries across large tracts of land primarily in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. These future orchards were properly fenced and left in the care of a local person. He returned from time to time to check on the developing orchards and presumably to collect his share of the profits.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1770: At Sea

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks: “*To Batavia*. Eat today a buttock of Buffaloe which had been 3 days in salt: it eat so well and had so thouroughly taken salt that it was resolvd to Salt meat for the ships company when our biggest Buffaloes who would weigh above 300 lb were killd.”

1821: Mexico

William Becknell set off from Missouri in 1821 for Santa Fe, in “the Empire of Mexico,” on a trading expedition. His ventures were successful, and he returned again the following year. He has the opportunity to try prairie dog.

We left our encampment early . . . and about noon came to a large

settlement or town of prairie dogs. . . . Having a desire to taste its flesh, I killed one, a small part of which I roasted, but found it strong and unpalatable. . . . We found here a ludicrous looking animal, perfectly unknown to any one of our company; it was about the size of a racoon, of a light grey color, had uncommonly fine fur, small eyes, and was almost covered with long shaggy hair; its toe nails were from one and a half to two inches in length; its meat was tender and delicious.

Not all hunters and consumers of the prairie dog agree with Becknell on its unpalatability:

Finding a dry mesquit, we broke off some of the larger branches, kindled a fire, and cooked for each man a [prairie] dog. The meat we found exceedingly sweet, tender, and juicy—resembling that of the squirrel, only that it was much fatter.

George Wilkins Kendall, 1844

I have often eaten the prairie dog, and his flesh is precisely like that of squirrel. There is a prejudice against eating this little animal on account of its name, but in this case, unlike most others, everything is in the name.

George Belden, 1870

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1668: London. England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys: “Could sleep but little last night for my concernment in this business of the victualling for Sir D. Gawden . . . walked to Charing cross, and there into the great new ordinary by my lord Mulgrave’s. . . . I had two grilled pigeons, very handsome, and good meat.”

1798: Germany

Dorothy Wordsworth was in Hamburg with her brother William Worsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and John Chester.

We dined with Mr. Klopstock. . . . We sate around the table without order;

Mrs. Klopstock on one side, her husband at the foot of the table. Mrs. K distributed all the dishes in succession. Soup 1st, 2nd, stewed veal without vegetables, 3rd sausages with cabbage, 4th oysters with spinach, 5th fowls with salad and currant jelly, dessert—grapes, biscuits, pears, plums, walnuts; afterwards coffee. A woman servant in Hanoverian cap waited at table.

1852: Australia

From the diary of Ellen Clacy, who accompanied her brother to the Goldfields of Victoria in 1852–1853.

Although impossible at the diggings to keep this day with those outward observances which are customary in civilized life, we attempted to make as much difference as possible between the day of rest and that of work. Frank performed the office of chaplain, and read the morning service in the calm and serious manner which we expected from him.

I was rather amused to see the alacrity with which, when this slight service was over, they all prepared to assist me in the formation of a huge plum-pudding for the Sunday's dinner. Stoning plums and chopping suet seemed to afford them immense pleasure—I suppose it was a novelty; and, contrary to the fact implied in the old adage, "too many cooks spoil the broth" our pudding turned out A 1.

September 27

SAINT COSMO & SAINT DAMIAN FEAST DAY

The twin brother saints are usually thought of as the patrons of physicians, but in Brazil they are particularly associated with children, who are indulged with gifts of candy.

Among those with Yoruba descent, twins are considered a special gift; a traditional caruru (stew) based on okra, seasoned with dendê palm oil and various garnishes, is served. The stew is served in a large bowl, or on seven smaller plates, and children are served first.

HITLER & MUSSOLINI DINE

1937: Germany

Benito Mussolini, the Dictator of Italy, visited Germany for four days in September 1937. On the evening of September 27, Adolf Hitler gave a banquet in the chancery for Mussolini and his entourage.

There is much debate about the actual nature of Hitler's often-quoted vegetarianism. Some say he was prone to digestive disturbances and found that avoiding meat reduced his symptoms, and this was turned to a propaganda opportunity by the spin-doctors of the time into a demonstration of his ethical stance against cruelty to animals. Whatever the truth, a vegetarian state banquet would have been highly unlikely under the circumstances, especially considering that Hitler clearly wanted to impress Mussolini.

The event and the menu were the subject of a *Time* magazine article in October the same year:

Strictly vegetarian and teetotaler Adolf Hitler made the great exception last week of nibbling clear through the State banquet he gave Benito Mussolini and toasting his guest in sweet German champagne. Menu: caviar, soup, sole, chicken, ices and fresh fruit. In after dinner conversations among Germans and Italians in the suites of the two leaders one theme loudly, confidently recurred: "The days when Britain and France were the arbiters of Europe are over. There are now not two great European powers but four": i.e.-Britain, France, Germany and Italy.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1870: USA

Edmund McIlhenny, of New Iberia, Louisiana, was granted Patent No. 107,701 for an "Improvement in Pepper Sauce." His patent application described a "new process for preparing an aromatic and strong sauce from the pepper known in the market as Tabasco pepper. This pepper is as strong as Cayenne pepper, but of finer flavour." On February 1, 1927, the trademark "Tabasco" was registered, with the date of first use stated as 1868.

His method of preparing the sauce, as described in the patent documents, was:

The ripe fruit is mashed to a pulp and mixed with fine vinegar and rock salt, in the proportion of one pint of vinegar and one handful of salt to every gallon of pulp.

The receptacle containing this mixture is closely covered, and the latter macerated for about six weeks, when the pulp is worked through a sieve that is just fine enough not to let the seeds to pass. About one drop of bisulphate of lime is then added to every ounce of mixture, for preventing fermentation.

The skins and seeds not passed through the sieve are potted for about twenty-four hours, with an ounce of alcohol to each pound of the residue.

This mixture is thoroughly agitated and then placed under a press, by which the remaining pulp and juice are forced out.

A drop of bisulphate of lime is added to every ounce received from the press. The two mixtures are now put together, and the whole compound worked through a fine flour sieve. The sauce is thus completely prepared and ready for use.

One or two drops of it will be sufficient for any dish.

1940: USA

A patent application was filed on this day with the U.S. Patent Office by the Dow Chemical Company, of Midland, Michigan, for “*Saran* for thermoplastic synthetic resins comprising polymers and co-polymers derived from vinylidene chloride.”

The plastic film was developed for military use, to protect equipment being transported overseas. The resin from which the film was developed was an accidental discovery by Ralph Wiley at Dow, in 1933.

By the end of the war the plastics industry represented a significant investment, and domestic applications were sought for its products. *Saran* was cleared for household domestic use in 1953.

RICE

1475: Italy

An early reference to rice production in northern Italy occurs in a letter on this day from Gian Galeazzo Sforza to the Duke D'Este of Ferrara. Sforza mentions *risone*, “an extremely interesting food . . . worthy of being cultivated,” and promises to send seeds. He stresses the productivity of the plant—from one sack of seeds, twelve sacks of rice can be produced.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1661: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

At noon met my wife at the Wardrobe—and there dined, where we find Capt. Country . . . come with some Grapes and Millons [Melons] from my Lord at Lisbone—the first that ever I saw any, and my wife and I eat some, and took some home. But the grapes are rare things . . . and after my wife had put up some of the grapes in a basket for to be sent to the King, we took a coach and home, where we find a hampire of Millons sent to me also.

1758: England

From the diary of Thomas Turner, a schoolteacher turned shopkeeper in a Sussex village: “In the morn, my brother and self set out for Eastbourne. We dined on shoulder of lamb, roasted, with onion sauce—my family at home dining on sheep’s head, lights [lungs] &c., boiled.”

1773: Scotland

From James Boswell’s *The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson*: “Though we had a great abundance of provisions, it is remarkable that Corrichatachin has literally no garden: not even a turnip, a carrot, or a cabbage.”

1857: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau: “I am surprised to find that, yesterday having been a sudden very warm day, the peaches have mellowed suddenly and wilted, and I find many more fallen than even after previous rains. Better if ripened more gradually.”

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1805: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day William Clark wrote:

[A]ll the men able to work comen[c]ed building 5 Canoes. . . . J. Colter returned he found only one of the lost horses, on his way killed a deer, half of which he gave the Indians the other proved nourishing to the Sick. The day verry hot, we purchase fresh Salmon of them. . . . Capt Lewis very Sick nearly all the men Sick.

1853: Africa

Heinrich Barth (1821–1865) was a German explorer who traveled extensively in Africa. He arrived in Timbuktu on September 7, 1853.

The following day [27th] I was so ill as to be quite unable to pay my respects to my protector [Sheik Sídi Áhmed el Bákay], who sent me a message begging me to quiet myself, as I might rest assured that nothing but my succumbing to illness could prevent me from safely returning to my native home. Meanwhile, as a proof of his hospitable disposition, he sent me a handsome present, consisting of two oxen, two sheep, two large vessels of butter, one camel load, or “suníye,” of rice, and another of negro-corn, cautioning me, at the same time, against eating any food which did not come from his own house.

September 28

FOOD FIRSTS

1893: Knoxville

The earliest use discovered to date of the term *hot dog*, in reference to the sausage, is in this day's edition of the *Knoxville Journal*: "Even the weinerwurst men began preparing to get the 'hot dogs' ready for sale Saturday night."

BIRD'S NEST SOUP FRAUD

2000: Thailand

The *Bangkok Post* on this day reported the arrest of a Thai businessman and the seizure of 1,700 bottles of fake bird's nest soup. The soup was apparently made from tree sap and sugar, not bird saliva.

Bird's nest soup is made from the nests of a species of swift, and is highly prized in Asia for its unique texture, which is given by the special salivary secretion produced by the male bird to build the nest. The soup is also believed to have medicinal value in a number of complaints.

Historically, the genuine article is extremely expensive because of the dangerous nature of the nest-harvest. The birds build their nest in the most precarious high reaches of limestone caves, although nowadays concrete nesting houses are built to lure the birds by human entrepreneurs. One kilogram of the highest-quality nests may be worth over \$10,000.

As with other exotic Eastern dishes, bird's nest soup became briefly fashionable in Europe in the nineteenth century, its name Frenchified to the far more glamorous-sounding *Potage aux Nids d'Hirondelles*.

Birds ' Nest Soup

. . . is even more of a luxury in China than turtle soup is in England . . . it forms the first dish at all grand dinners. Here is a receipt for preparing Potage aux Nids d'Hirondelles, translated from the Chinese:

Take clean white birds' nest shreds, or birds' nests, and soak thoroughly. Pick out all feathers. Boil in soup or water till tender, and of the colour of jadestone. Place pigeons' eggs below, and add some ham shreds on top. Boil again slowly with little fluid. If required sweet, then boil in clear water

till tender, add sugar-candy, and then eat. This is a most clear and pure article, and thick (or oily) substances should not be added. It should be boiled for a long time; for, if not boiled till tender, it will cause diarrhoea.

—*Things Chinese: Or, Notes Connected with China*, by James Dyer Ball (1904)

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1767: France

Denis Diderot, philosopher, writer, and editor of the *Encyclopedie*, often described his meals to his lover Sophie Volland in his letters. On this day he visited a *restaurant*—a new phenomenon at the time.

Did I like the restaurant! Yes indeed: a limitless taste. Service is good, rather expensive, but at the time one wants. The pretty hostess never comes to chat with her clients; she is too honest and decent for that; but her clients go and chat with her as much as they like, and she answers very well. One eats alone. Everyone has his little cabinet where his attention wanders: she comes to see of her own accord whether you need anything; it's a marvel, and it seems everyone is praising it.

1773: Scotland

From James Boswell's *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson*.

[A]nd I must take some merit from my assiduous attention to him, and from my contriving that he shall be easy wherever he goes, that he shall not be asked twice to eat or drink any thing (which always disgusts him) that he shall be provided with water at his meals, and many such little things, which, if not attended to would fret him.

1849: At Sea

From the *Memorandum* of Elizabeth Millar Purdie, the wife of the ship's surgeon on the voyage of the *Mooltan* from Greenock, Scotland, to Port Chalmers, Otago, New Zealand.

No dancing last night—but it would appear that sailors must have some fun so we had a visit from Neptune alias our good natured black cook. The potatoes have become unfit for use—they were brought up front the hold and many thrown over board, sacks and all. The stench from the hold was dreadful and made us glad as well as sorry to part with them. We are now suffering from a tropical sun and with little or no wind are making but slow progress.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1770: At Sea

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks.

To Batavia. Our beef experiment was this day tried and succeeded but scurvily. The meat which had been killd on the 26th was not salted till Cold: it hardly stunk: the outside which had been in absolute contact with the salt was quite good but under that which formd a crust of various thickness the meat was in a wonderfull manner corrupted; it lookd well but every fibre was destroyd and disolv'd so that the whole was a paste of the consistence of soft putty yet this hard[l]y stunk.

1797: Africa

From the narrative of the travels of Francisco José de Lacerda e Almeida *To the Land of King Cazembe*: “In the afternoon Mouro sent me his present of Pombe, four large chickens, and a gazelle almost decomposed, with a message that he did not visit me in person, as he was preparing subsistence for my people.”

1833: Argentina



Viscachas

From Charles Darwin's journal of the voyage of the *Beagle*. He set out on an excursion to Santa Fe, about three hundred miles away.

We passed the small town of Luxan where there is a wooden bridge over the river—a most unusual convenience in this country. . . . The bizcacha is well known to form a prominent feature in the zoology of the Pampas. . . . Their flesh, when cooked, is very white and good, but it is seldom used.

Bizcacha or viscachas are rodents from the family *Chinchillidae*. The particular example eaten by Darwin was probably the Plains viscacha (*Lagostomus maximus*). Not all agree with Darwin that the flesh is seldom used. A book from the unlikely publishers The London Religious Tract Society called *Quadrupeds; or, Outlines of a popular history of the class Mammalia* (1840) refers to the “Bisacacha” as “an animal between a rabbit and a badger” and says that “their flesh is very much liked by the people, and they are remarkably fat, and on that account, when caught at any distance from their holes, are easily run down. As

for the more specific flavor of the flesh of the animal, a Spanish-English dictionary of 1809 gives the description as “*Bizcácha*: An animal with a long tail in the kingdom of Peru, the flesh of which resembles that of rabbit.”

1866: Africa

From David Livingstone’s journal of his expedition to find the source of the Nile. He is in the region of Lake Nyasa. “The chief . . . was prodigiously fat. This is the African way of showing love—plenty of fat and beer. He brought also a huge basket of pombe, the native beer, and another of porridge, and a pot of cooked meat. More food was brought to us than we could carry.”

September 29

MICHAELMAS DAY

Michaelmas is the Festival of St. Michael and All Angels. There is an old tradition in Britain of eating goose on this day, and, as an old English rhyme explains: “He who eats goose on Michaelmas day / shan’t money lack or debts to pay.”

In the Hebrides (Scotland), there used to be a tradition that the women and girls would gather Saint Michael’s wild carrots (the name is a mystery, but perhaps it was simply eminently fit for harvest on this day, hence became associated with the saint). The ritual involved digging triangular holes (signifying Michael’s shield), using a three-pronged mattock (representing his trident) and tying the carrots in bunches with a triple red thread. The carrots were given to visitors on Michaelmas Day.

THE MALALOS BANQUET

1898: Philippines

Two grand meals were served in the City of Malalos on September 29, 1898, to celebrate the declaration (on June 12) of the independence of the Philippines. The luncheon menu itself was a work of art. It was designed by Arcadio Arellano in the form of a Philippine flag, with the words *Solemne ratificacion de*

la Independencia Filipina. When the menu was opened, there were three inside panels bearing the words made famous by the French Revolutionists. Each of the three panels carried the battle cry of the 1789 French Revolution—*Libertad*. The menu, printed on the center panel, appears to be pure, classical French cuisine, but it is possible that the dishes were adapted slightly to a Philippine style—we will never know. The menu was:

Hors D'Oeuvre

Huitres, Crevettes roses, Beurre radis, Olives, Saucisson de Lyon

Sardines aux tomates, Saumon Hollandais

Entrees

Coquille de Crabes, Vol-au-vent a la Financiere, Abatis de poulet a la Tagale

Cotelletes de mouton a la Papillote – Pommes de Terre paille

Dinde Truffee a la Manilloise

Filet a la Chateaubriand – Haricots verts

Jambon froid, Asperges en branche

Dessert

Fromages, Fruits, Confitures, Gelee de Fraises, Glaces

Vins

Bordeaux, Sauterne, Xeres, Champagne

Liqueurs: Chartreuse, Cognac

Café – The

YARMOUTH HERRING FAIR

Norfolk, England

Yarmouth is a town built on the sands of East Anglia, at the common estuary of the Yare, Bure, and Waveney rivers. It was one of the *Cinque Ports* on the eastern coast of England—the five strategically important ports on the east coast of England immediately opposite to that of France. Aside from its strategic importance, Yarmouth was a hugely important fishing center. It became very wealthy in medieval times on account of the fishing, and a great herring fair was held there from the twelfth century. It rapidly became one of the biggest fairs in the country, where much business was transacted. The fair began on Michaelmas Day and ran for forty days, to Martinmas.

The importance of the Yarmouth fishing industry to Britain is shown by the fact that in 1358, in the reign of Edward III, the Statute of Herrings was enacted, which specifically addressed the way in which fish was to be sold (and not to be sold) at the Yarmouth fair.

Forasmuch as the commons of the realm of England, at the parliament holden at Westminster the Monday next after the week of Easter, the year of the reign of our lord the King, Edward the Third, of England xxxi, and of France xviii, have complained them to our lord the King, because the people of Great Yarmouth do encounter the fishers bringing herring to the said town in the time of the fair, and do buy and forestall the herring before they do come to the town. And also the hostlers of the said town, that lodge the fishers coming thither with their herring, will not suffer the said fishers to sell their said herring, nor meddle with the sale thereof, but sell them at their own will, as dear as they will, and give to the fishers that pleaseth them, whereby the fishers do withdraw themselves to come thither, and so is the herring set at much greater price than ever it was, to the great damage of our lord the King, of the lords, and of all the people. Wherefore our lord the King, seeing the mischiefs in this behalf, by the assent of the great men and all the commons, hath ordained and stablished remedy upon the said mischiefs, in the form as followeth.

To give an idea of the range of orders in the statute, the first few paragraphs after the introduction given above were:

First, That no herring be bought or sold in the sea, till the fishers be come in the haven with their herring, and that the cable of the ship be drawn to land.

Item, That the fishers be free to sell their herring to all that come to the fair of Great Yarmouth, without any disturbance of their hostellers or any other. And when the fishers will sell their merchandizes in the port, they shall have their hostellers with them, if they there will be, and in their presence, and in the presence of other merchants, openly shall sell their merchandizes.

And that every man claim his part for the taking (i. e. the price) after the rate of the same merchandizes so sold; and the said sale shall be made from the sun-rising, to the sun-setting, and not before nor after, upon forfeiture of the same merchandizes.

FOOD & WAR

1916: Britain, World War I

An interim report for mitigating the rise in prices of meat, milk, and bacon was issued by the Board of Trade Committee on Food Prices on this day. There were recommendations, among others, to speed up mercantile shipbuilding, for the development of a government meat-purchase policy, and for the empowering of local authorities to open municipal milk, meat, bacon, and other foodstuff shops, where retailers are taking excessive profits. There was also a recommendation for the voluntary institution of one meatless day a week (for those not engaged in heavy manual labor).

Over the next few days the proposal for a meatless day a week was discussed at length in the newspapers. *The Times* on October 3 said:

It is agreed that one meatless day a week would do much to ease the position in regard to food. The official calculation is that the average amount of meat consumed per head of the population (which included babies) is 10 1/2 lb a month. This could be reduced with advantage to individual health and national well-being. The President of the Board of Trade has declared that a reduction in meat consumption of 2 lb per head per month would be sufficient to economise the national surplus, diminish the civilian demands on shipping, and avoid further advances in prices. Another calculation is that one meatless day would save the country £500,000 per week.

The *Times* also pointed out that “no economic good” would come from substituting fish for meat, because fish was perhaps scarcer, and certainly as dear, as meat, so the only practical option was a vegetarian diet. In this regard, the Catholic Church, in most diocese, had suspended the obligation to abstain from meat on Fridays for the duration of the war.

There was considerable discussion as to which day of the week would be declared meatless. Other authorities on cooking pointed out that the giving up of meat was not an economy of foodstuffs if the loss of fat had to be made up by supplementing vegetables and cereals with butter, cream, margarine, and eggs. There were also arguments that vegetarian meals took longer to prepare, and larger quantities were needed to be satisfying, which would be a problem for working-class women, whose time in the kitchen was already stretched.

In *The Times* of October 3, the “head of a big domestic organisation” gave the following suggestion for a meatless meal which would be “seasonable and fairly economical without involving the labor of preparation of cereals. Her menu was: Tomato Soup (made of meat stock), Scalloped Oysters, Apple Dumpling (with a few dates added to lessen the amount of sugar eaten), and a “savoury to follow” of Macaroni Cheese. It would certainly not be cheap today, when oysters have become a luxury food.

Scalloped Oysters

Take twenty oysters (at 20 for 1 shilling), make a sauce of flour and water, season with pepper and salt, and add the oysters, in a shallow earthenware dish, place a layer of breadcrumbs and a layer of the mixture alternately with breadcrumbs on the top. Cover the top with a piece of margarine or butter and bake in a sharp oven.

1917: USA, World War I

The Food Administration unveiled its “Food Will Win the War” poster.

FOOD & THE LAW

1384: Italy

A statute of the *Lega del Chianti* prohibited the harvesting of grapes before September 29, because prior to that date “the wine would not be good.”

1793: France, “The Law of the Maximum”

The French National Convention passed legislation to fix prices of “articles of prime necessity,” until the end of 1794. Items covered under the laws were fresh meat, salt meat and bacon, butter, sweet oil, salt fish, wine, brandy, vinegar, cider, beer. As with so many similar laws over the course of history, the law proved impossible to enforce in the long term.

DANDELION COFFEE

1846: USA

The *American Agriculturalist* included a recipe for dandelion coffee in its edition of this day. These may be the earliest instructions in an American publication for this beverage. The recipe was taken from *British Husbandry*, by John French Burke, 1811.

Dandelion Coffee

Dr Harrison [Howison], of Edinburgh, prefers dandelion coffee to that of Mecca; and many persons all over the Continent prefer a mixture of succory and coffee to coffee alone. Dig up the roots of dandelion, wash them well but do not scrape them; dry them, cut them in bits, the size of peas, and then roast them in an earthen pot or coffee-roaster of any kind, and grind them in the coffee mill, or bruise them in any way. The great secret of good coffee is to have it fresh-burnt and fresh-ground.

Dandelion root has a long history of medicinal use dating back to the tenth century. It was extensively used as an early adulterant to coffee, but gradually became enjoyed in its own right, particularly by those nineteenth-century vegetarian groups who also eschewed all condiments and stimulants.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1768: At Sea

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks.

About noon a young shark was seen from the Cabbin windows following the ship, who immediately took a bait and was caught on board; he provd to be the *Squalus Charcharias* of Linn[aeus] and assisted us in clearing up much confusion which almost all authors had made about that species; with him came on board 4 sucking fish, *echineis remora* Linn. who were preserved in spirit. Notwisting it was twelve O’Clock before the shark was taken, we made shift to have a part of him stewd for dinner, and very good meat he was, at least in the opinion of Dr Solander and myself, tho some of the Seamen did not seem to be fond of him, probably from some prejudice founded on the species sometimes feeding on human flesh.

1797: Africa

From the narrative of the travels of Francisco José de Lacerda e Almeida *To the Land of King Cazembe*.

As the Fumo did not keep his word touching supplies, I sent my people to buy what was offered, namely manioc flour, as good as any I have seen in Mozambique, millet still in spike, but very black from the smoke with which they drive away the insects.

All the manioc meal (farinha), even in the Zimboé or Cazembe’s city, is made in the same way. They soak the roots, peel and sun-dry them whole: they pound and grind them on a stone when wanted for use, and then they make the so-called massa, dough, or unleavened bread. Whilst travelling they carry the roots entire, and expend them as they are required. They also eat, but not often, the sweet manioc roasted.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1766: England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde: “At dinner with the Creeds: N.B. We had a Pine Apple after dinner, the first I ever saw or tasted.”

September 30

DINNER IN A GALE AT SEA

1675: At Sea

From the diary of Henry Teonge, chaplain aboard HMS *Assistance*, *Bristol*, and *Royal Oak*.

A brave gale all night, which brought us this morning neare Candia, to a small iland called Goza, and another a little more eastward, called Anti-Goza. More myrth at dinner this day then ever since wee cam on board. The wind blew very hard, and wee had to dinner a rump of Zante beife, a little salted and well rosted. When it was brought in to the cabin and set on the table, (that is, on the floore, for it could not stand on the table for the ship's tossing) our Captaine sent for the Master, Mr. Fogg, and Mr. Davis, to dine with him selfe and my selfe, and the Leiuetenant, and the Pursor. And wee all sat close round about the beife, som securing themselves from slurring by setting their feete against the table, which was fast tyd downe. The Leiuetenant set his feete against the bedd, and the Captaine set his back against a chayre which stood by the syd of the ship. Severall tumbles wee had, wee and our plates, and our knives slurrd oft together. Our liquor was white rubola, admirable good. Wee had also a couple of fatt pullets; and whilst wee were eating of them, a sea cam, and forced into the cabin through the chinks of a port hole, which by lookeing behind me I just discovered when the water was coming under mee. I soone got up, and no whitt wett; but all the rest were well washed, and got up as fast as the could, and laughed on at the other. Wee dranke the King's and Duke's healths, and all our wives particularly.

FOOD FIRSTS

1658: London, England

Tea was advertised in the *Mercurius Politicus* of this date: "That excellent and by all Physitians approved *China* drink called by the Chineans Tcha, by other Nations Tay alias Tee, is sold at the *Sultanness Head* Cophee-House in *Sweetings* Rents, by the Royal Exchange, London."

FOOD SAFETY

1994: Hungary

Paprika was taken off the shelves throughout Hungary on this day, due to cases of serious lead poisoning being attributed to contamination of the spice. The first case of poisoning was reported in August, and over four dozen people were ultimately known to have become ill from it—several of them dying. The scandal rocked Hungary. Paprika is one of the country's most important exports, and an absolutely indispensable ingredient in Hungarian cuisine.

It turned out that the anti-corrosion agent, red lead, was added to the paprika to add weight and color—and enhance the profit of the unscrupulous dealers. Almost 6 percent of over three thousand random samples checked were found to be contaminated, and ultimately 150 tons of paprika were destroyed. Mafia links were suggested, and ultimately over forty people were charged. The Hungarian government reassured the rest of Europe that no contaminated paprika had been exported.

The ban was lifted on October 24.

VEGETARIAN SOCIETY

1847: Britain

The Vegetarian Society was formed on this day in Ramsgate, the founding members being the same people who had established a vegetarian hospital the previous year. Within twelve months the society had 478 members, 212 of whom attended the AGM and dinner at Hayward's Hotel in Manchester. The banquet included macaroni omelette, onion and sage fritters, savoury pie, plum pudding, moulded rice, and flummery.

This was the first time the word *vegetarian* was used; previously those who chose not to eat meat were referred to as “Pythagoreans,” from the name of the Greek philosopher and mathematician who abstained from meat.

Some of Phythagoras's teachings, from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*:

Flesh satisfies the wild beast's hunger, though not all of them, since horses, sheep and cattle live on grasses, but those that are wild and savage: Armenian tigers, raging lions, and wolves and bears, enjoy food wet with

blood. Oh, how wrong it is for flesh to be made from flesh; for a greedy body to fatten, by swallowing another body; for one creature to live by the death of another creature! So amongst such riches, that earth, the greatest of mothers, yields, you are not happy unless you tear, with cruel teeth, at pitiful wounds, recalling Cyclops's practice, and you cannot satisfy your voracious appetite, and your restless hunger, unless you destroy other life!

But that former age, that we call golden, was happy with the fruit from the trees, and the herbs the earth produced, and did not defile its lips with blood. Then birds winged their way through the air in safety, and hares wandered, unafraid, among the fields, and its own gullibility did not hook the fish: all was free from trickery, and fearless of any guile, and filled with peace. But once someone, whoever he was, the author of something unfitting, envied the lion's prey, and stuffed his greedy belly with fleshy food, he paved the way for crime. It may be that, from the first, weapons were warm and bloodstained from the killing of wild beasts, but that would have been enough: I admit that creatures that seek our destruction may be killed without it being a sin, but while they may be killed, they still should not be eaten.

From that, the wickedness spread further, and it is thought that the pig was first considered to merit slaughter because it rooted up the seeds with its broad snout, and destroyed all hope of harvest. The goat was led to death, at the avenging altar, for browsing the vines of Bacchus. These two suffered for their crimes! What did you sheep do, tranquil flocks, born to serve man, who bring us sweet milk in full udders, who give us your wool to make soft clothing, who give us more by your life than you grant us by dying? What have the oxen done, without guile or deceit, harmless, simple, born to endure labour?

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1644: France

John Evelyn, the famous gardener and diarist was at Vienne, in the Dauphine, on this day, and wrote of eating truffles: "[H]ere we lay, and supp'd; having (amongst other dainties) a dish of Truffles, which is a certaine earth-nut, found out by an hog, train'd up to it, & for which those creatures, are sold at a greate

price: It is in truth an incomparable meate.”

In 1699 in his *Acetaria*, he seems to have changed his opinion as he refers to them as “rank and provocative Excrescences.”

1798: Germany

Dorothy Wordsworth was in Hamburg with her brother, the poet William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and John Chester. She described her first impressions in a letter:

On enquiry we found that we could have no dinner, for dinner was over. I went upstairs to dress, a *manservant* brought up napkin, water &c. . . . When I returned below, I found the party eating cold beef—no cloth spread—no vegetables but some bad cucumbers pickled without vinegar. Very good wine at one mark 4 sous the bottle. We had afterwards tea and coffee; the bread good, halfpenny rolls, butter not fresh.

October

OCTOBER 1

THE CHICAGO CENTENNIAL

1903: Chicago

The menu for the banquet at the close of the centennial celebration of the founding of Chicago, held on this day, was:

Blue Points Haute Sauterne

Consomme Celestine *Amontillado Sherry*

Cannelons de Volaille

Black Bass, Mornay Gratin *Pontet Canet*

Potatoes Viennoise, Cucumbers

Rack of Lamb, Bourgeoise

Stuffed Green Pepper

Centennial Punch

Roast Quail on Toast *Moet & Chandon White Seal*

Lettuce Salad

Chicago Ice Cream

Petits Fours

Roquefort and Port du Salut

Toasted Beaten Biscuits

Coffee White Rock

Liqueurs

Cigars

FOOD & THE LAW

2011: Denmark

Denmark introduced the world's first "food fat" tax in an attempt to reduce consumption of high fat foods, and offset the economic costs of obesity and related health issues. The decision was controversial, however, many scientists saying that the culprits in the development of obesity and other problems of over-nutrition are sugar and refined carbohydrates.

The tax was applied at a rate of 16 Danish Krone to foods containing more than 2.3 percent saturated fat, such as butter, cheese, meat, oils, and such prepared foods as pizza. It was short-lived however, and was abolished a little over twelve months later for the very pragmatic reason that not only did it not work, but it backfired in unexpected ways. The overall effect was to raise food prices and put Danish jobs at risk, and in any case, many Danes had gotten around the tax by crossing the border into Germany to purchase the food items there.

The attempt to address a problem such as obesity in this way also raised many questions about the appropriate level of intervention and control by a government in an individual's lifestyle choices.

ENGLISH BREAKFAST

1999: Britain

The food industry minister, Joyce Quin, launched "Farmhouse Breakfast 2000—Celebrating Regional Excellence" at Fortnum and Masons' in London on this day. The campaign was orchestrated in an attempt to raise awareness of Britain's rich food and drink heritage, and of the process of "plough to plate." Breakfast at the launch included apple juice, organic muesli, sweet cure bacon, and Northern Irish rare breed sausages.

FOOD & WAR

1806: Europe

Napoleon Bonaparte was on campaign in Saxony. Feeding a land army was always a massive undertaking, but the traditional methods of foraging and of requisitioning local supplies was no longer adequate because of the sheer size of Napoleon's land army at this time. On this day Napoleon ordered the establishment of a bakery at Bamberg to make four days' rations—the amount carried at any one time—of *pain biscuité* for 80,000 men. Field ovens could be constructed and operational within twenty-four hours, but the logistics of getting flour supplies in and distributing the bread to the troops in the field remained a huge logistical issue.

1870: The Siege of Paris

From *The Diary of a Besieged Resident* (Henry Labouchere):

Restaurants cannot get enough for their customers. This evening, for instance, at seven o'clock, on going into a restaurant, I found almost everything already eaten up. I was obliged to “vanquish the prejudices of my stomach,” and make a dinner on sheeps' trotters, pickled cauliflower, and peaches.”

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1805: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day William Clark wrote:

[N]othin to eat except a little dried fish which they men complain of as working of them as as much as a dose of Salts. Capt Lewis getting much better. Several Indians visit us from the different tribes below Some from the main South fork [probably the Snake River] our hunters killed nothing to day.

1835: Galapagos

From Charles Darwin's journal of the voyage of the *Beagle*.

Albemarle Island. . . . Since leaving the last Island, owing to the small quantity of water on board, only half allowance of water has been served out (i.e. ½ a Gallon for cooking & all purposes). . . . We here have another large Reptile in great numbers; it is a great Lizard, from 10-15 lb. in weight & 2-4 feet in length; is in structure closely allied to those "imps of darkness" which frequent the seashore. This one inhabits burrows to which it hurries when frightened, with quick & clumsy gait. They have a ridge & spines along the back; are colored an orange yellow, with the hinder part of back brick red. They are hideous animals; but are considered good food: this day forty were collected.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1697: Boston

Samuel Sewall, of Harvard College, went on what we would now call a "picnic" expedition to Hog Island on this day, and his diary provides the first mention of apple pie in an American source. "Had first Butter, Honey, Curds and cream. For Dinner, very good Rost Lamb, Turkey, Fowls, Applepy."

1808: England

Jane Austen wrote to her sister Cassandra on this day: "*Castle Square*. We have had four brace of birds lately, in equal lots, from Shalden and Neatham. We had two pheasants last night from Neatham."

1856: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau:

I boiled some rice at the carry, for our dinner, in cooking which I consider myself adept, having had a good deal of experience in it. P. said that he sometimes used it, but boiled it till it all fell apart, and, finding this mess unexpectedly soft though quickly prepared, he asked if it had not been

cooked before. Washing the dishes, especially the greasy ones, is the most irksome duty of the camp, and it reminded me of that sacred band in Fourier's scheme, who took upon themselves the most disagreeable services. The consequence is that they do not often get washed.

1881: USA

From the fieldwork diary of Alice Cunningham Fletcher, which she published as *Camping with the Sioux*.

Went to Standing Bear's tent—a stove stood in the middle, beds at the left of entrance, trunks, bags of grain at the back edge, rocking and two chairs. We enter silently and sit at the back part, a blanket on the ground under our feet. Bye & bye we go out. Wife prepares the meal. We return and seated on the floor, partake of it. A clean table cloth, roast pork, stewed beef, soup, bread—sit on the left legs. I am awkward. Standing Bear at Mr. T's right, then Susette, then me. Old Smoke came in after we had finished. Standing Bear's wife sat on bed. No particular duties except for us. Silver spoons, very nice—pet dog, without hair. Wind blew like hurricane, very hot inside

FOOD FOR THE POOR

1871: Wales

At a meeting of the Board of Guardians of the Aberystwyth Union, held on this day, it was resolved that “the following amended Dietary Tables for the Paupers of the respective Classes and Sexes hereunder described, in the Workhouse of this Union be submitted for the sanction and approval of the Local Government Board, pursuant to the General Dietary Order of the Poor Law Board (dated the 16th day of February, 1848.) The recommendations were sanctioned at the meeting of the Board in December.”

There were different dietary tables for the able-bodied, for the “aged, infirm, and imbeciles,” and for children.

For the able-bodied, the breakfast every day was 1½ pints of oatmeal gruel, and bread (6 oz. for men, 5 oz. for women), and supper was bread of a varying amount (from 2 to 6 oz.) depending on whether it was served with 1½ pints of broth or oatmeal gruel or 2 ounces of cheese.

The dinner for the able-bodied varied slightly on different days of the week. The only meat days were Sunday and Thursday, when men received four ounces and women, three ounces. The meat was served with sixteen ounces of potatoes. Dinners on the other days consisted of bread of varying amounts, depending on whether soup or suet pudding or cheese or potato hash were served.

The “aged, infirm, and imbeciles” were given for breakfast every day bread (6 oz. for men, 5 oz. for women) butter half an ounce, and one pint of tea. Supper was the same as breakfast. Dinners varied depending on the day of the week, as with the able-bodied inmates. Meat (4 oz. for men, 3 oz. for women) was given three days a week, on Sunday, Tuesday, and Thursday, along with sixteen ounces of potatoes and two ounces of bread. Dinner on the other days consisted of bread of varying amounts depending on whether it was served with suet pudding or potato hash. There was no cheese given to this group.

Other than the potatoes, there is no mention of vegetables, and certainly none of fruit.

A FUNERAL FEAST

1554: England

The merchant-tailor and diarist Henry Machyn (Machin) wrote of the dinner which followed the funeral of the Duke of Norfolk at Framlingham.

For the furnishing of which [the dinner] were killed forty great oxen and a hundred sheep, and sixty calves, besides venison, swans, and cranes, capons, rabbits, pigeons, pikes, and other provisions both flesh and fish. There was also great plenty of wine; and of bread and beer as great a plenty as ever been known, both for ryche and pore: all the co[untry] came thither, and a great dolle of moneu there wer [bestowed upon the poorer sort] for he as cared from [this entry appears not to have been completed.]

ON THE AIR

1924: USA

The first daytime radio cooking program began on this day. The “Betty Crocker

THE first daytime radio COOKING program began on this day. THE "Betty CROCKER Cooking School of the Air" was developed in attempt to help rescue a local Minnesota radio station from bankruptcy, and it was an instant success. Initially, the voice of Betty Crocker was provided by a different actor in each state, reading from the same script, but in 1927 the program was taken over by the fledgling NBC network.

Betty Crocker was a fictional persona invented in 1921 by the Washburn-Crosby Company to promote its Gold Medal Flour. "Betty's" role was to personify the friendly, helpful housewife and to answer customer enquiries about baking, but in a very short amount of time she became a cultural icon. According to *Fortune Magazine* in 1945, Betty Crocker was the second most famous American woman after Eleanor Roosevelt.

CURRANT WINE

1848: USA

The *Scientific American* magazine edition of this day contained the following recipe.

Currant Wine

In answer to the request of a correspondent, we give the following recipe. Bruise eight gallons of red currants with one quart of raspberries. Press out the juice, and to the residuum after pressure, add eleven gallons of cold water. Add two pounds of beet root sliced as thin as possible, to give color, and let them infuse, with frequent stirring, for twelve hours; then press out the liquor as before, and add it to the juice. Next dissolve twenty pounds of raw sugar in the mixed liquor, and three ounces of red tartar in powder.

In some hours the fermentation will commence; when this is complete, add one gallon of brandy, let it stand for one week and then rack off and let it stand two months. It may now finally be racked off and placed in a cool cellar where it will keep for years.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1866: USA

J. Osterhoudt was granted Patent No. 58,554 for an “Improved Method of Opening Tin Cans.” His innovation was to incorporate a lid which could be peeled back with “a suitable key or a pair of pliers or nippers.” Prior to this invention, opening a can was no easy task, as Osterhoudt explains in his patent specifications:

Preserve-cans, paint-boxes, kegs, sardine boxes, or other vessels made of sheet metal, and intended to be closed hermetically, are generally provided with a round hole in their top, through which they are filled, and which, when the can or box is full, is closed by soldering over it a disk of sheet metal. When the can or box is to be opened this disk has to be removed, and with, boxes or cans as now most commonly made, this operation is attended with great difficulty.

The disk, being firmly soldered all round, has to be started by punching a hole through the top of the can or box, and then it can be removed only by cutting round it with proper tools.

EXPLORERS & FOOD

1797: Africa

From the narrative of the travels of Francisco José de Lacerda e Almeida *To the Land of King Cazembe*: “When beginning the march I met two brothers of Cazembe and a son of the Fumo Anceva, his relation, escorting a goodly store of manioc, sun-dried “bush-beef,” and two she-goats for our Caffres.”

1805: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day William Clark wrote: “[N]othing to eate but roots . . . nothing except a Small Prarie wolf Killed to day, our Provisions all out excpt what fiew fish we purchase of the Indians with us; we kill a horse for the men at work to eate and make Suep for the Sick men.” And John Ordway wrote: “[O]ur officers thought proper with the oppinion of the party to kill a good horse which was done and we eat the meat as earnest as though it had been the best meat in the world.”

1824: Australia

Hamilton Hume and William Hilton Hovell and their small team set off on a journey of exploration of the area southwest of the Murrumbidgee, taking as supplies for four months 290 kilos of flour, 91 kilos of salted pork, 45 kilos of sugar, 6 kilos of tea, 5 kilos of soap, and 4 kilos of flour. (See **November 1.**)

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1874: At Sea

Thomas Payne Judkins and his wife were en route from England to New Zealand aboard the sailing ship *Assaye*. They left on September 1, 1874. On October 2 he wrote: "I would advise all who intend to emigrate to be married before they start for, exclusive of all the rigorous restrictions against communications between the single women and the single men, they would fare better in respect of rations."

OCTOBER 3

BREAKFAST AT THE SANITARIUM

1899: USA

Not a single sausage, steak, or piece of bacon was there to tempt the appetite of the clients at breakfast at the St. Helena Sanitarium in California on this day.

Fresh Fruit

Grapes Figs

Grains

Snowflake Oat Meal

Rice Gluten and Granola Whole Wheat

Granola Granose

Toasts

Prune Cream

Granose Biscuit Zwieback

Entrees

Breaded [?] Nutose

Eggs

Poached Scrambled Boiled

Nut Foods

Nut Venison Nutose

Nut Butter Nutlet

Vegetables

Baked Potatoes and Cream Sauce Potato Stew

Breads

Unfermented Fermented

Whole Wheat Rolls Whole Wheat Bread

Sticks Graham Bread

Graham Rolls Zwieback

Liquid Foods

Caramel Cereal Milk

Cooked Fruits

Baked Pears Prunes

Articles Prepared to Order

Gluten Wafers Pop Corn

Pea Puree Kumyss

Cream Hot Milk

Oat Meal Gruel Gluten Gruel

Prune Toast Tomato Toast Egg Toast

Walnuts Mixed Nuts Almonds

HUSPOT & HERRINGS

1574: Netherlands

The siege of the city of Leiden (in what is now the Netherlands) by Spanish forces ended on this day. The people of the walled city had managed to keep a Spanish force of ten thousand at bay for two months. In desperation, the ailing King William ordered the dykes to be cut to allow the sea to reclaim the country, in the belief that the land could be reclaimed from the sea more easily than from the Spanish.

For whatever geological or meteorological reasons, the sea did not behave as expected, however, and the land was not flooded when expected. Then, on the night of October 2/3, after two days of severe wind, a violent noise was heard in the night. Believing that the allies of Leiden were come to attack, the Spaniards fled. The noise had been that of a large part of the wall of the city finally giving way in the face of the wind and sea.

There are two dishes that are still eaten on October 3, in celebration of this victory. There were relief ships already waiting out at sea, for an opportunity to relieve the siege and deliver their cargo of bread and herrings to the populace, so these foods are an integral part of the celebration. The other is *huspot*—a sort of soup or stew of vegetables and whatever else is available. The story about the origin of this dish is that an orphan boy (said to be named Cornelius Joppensz), was given six guilders to sneak out of the city to ensure that the Spanish had

indeed left, and he came across a pot of stew (which the Spanish would have called *cocido*), still simmering in one of the camps—testament to the speed of withdrawal of the troops.

THE OYSTER BUSINESS

1853: Australia

Shortly after the bushranger George Melville was hanged for his crimes in Melbourne, his widow retrieved his body and put it on display, on ice, in the window of her oyster shop and maintained a constant harangue to anyone who would listen, about his innocence. It is not known how much harm or benefit her actions were to her oyster sales, but they were certainly a trigger for the creation of the 1855 Act to Regulate the Execution of Criminals, which, among its other orders, stipulated that burial of an executed criminal was to be within the gaol where the execution was carried out.

SHIPWRECK CHAMPAGNE

1998: England

Christies in London put up for auction two cases of champagne which had been in the Baltic Sea since 1916, when the Swedish schooner *Jonkoping* was sunk by a German U boat. The vessel had been commissioned by Tsar Nicholas II of Russia to deliver a consignment fine wine to Finland. Two thousand bottles of champagne were recovered from the shipwrecked vessel in 1998. It was found that the constant temperature and pressure in the Gulf of Finland had kept the wine in fine condition. Wine from the shipwreck was also sold in Russia.

A bottle of *Heidseich* 1907 became one of the most expensive bottles of wine in the world when it sold for \$275,000 at the auction.

FOOD & WAR

1939: Britain, World War II

The “Dig for Victory” campaign was launched by the Ministry of Agriculture. School playing fields were dug up, and children were encouraged to plant

vegetables as part of the war effort.



British Dig for Victory wartime poster

(SSPL via Getty Images)

FOOD & THE LAW

2003: Australia

Australia has very strict quarantine laws intended to keep the island continent free from many of the plant and animal diseases that plague Europe and America. One disadvantage has been that the importation of cheese made from unpasteurized milk has not been allowed—a highly controversial decision for several reasons. The law was challenged in 2003, when cheese enthusiasts imported a quantity of Roquefort. The Court of Appeal held up the decision that the cheese had to be destroyed by “deep burial.” Eighty kilograms of superb Roquefort cheese were subsequently dumped (deeply) at a public landfill near Melbourne.

BREAD FOR THE BRETHERN

1464: England

There was a review on this day into the gifts and alms given to the Hospital of St. Nicholas of Pontefract, in the county of Yorkshire. The word *hospital* is related to “hospitality” and did not use to refer exclusively to places for the sick, but usually an institution with a broader role—one of hospitality to travelers as well as the sick, often with a school associated—all run by monks and nuns.

We find that the Hospital of St. Nicholas “ought to sustain 13 brethren or sisters” of whom two were to be servitors to the others. As with such institutions, the day to day food and monetary allowances were specified in the most minute detail.

And that one of the bretheren or sisters, as well for Almes to be had in their foresaid house as for their labour and service to the other in the said Hospitall, ought to have and receive every 15 dayes 14 white loves, and viij browne ones *de integro frumento* [wheaten bread], and for other their pittances xvijd [sixteen pence] in ready money. And the other of the said bretheren or sisters ought to have and receive, every 15 dayes, 5 white loves and 2 browne ones, and for all other pittances xxijd. And 4 of the 11 bretheren or sisters shall receive every 15 dayes 4 browne loves *de integro frumento*, as it comes from the sheafe, and every lofe shall weigh 50 shillings, and for other pittances vjd.ob. And the other 7 bretheren of the 11

shall receive every 15 dayes 6 browne loves, and for other their pittances 6*d.* ob. And on every feast day of the yeare, whereon the foresaid bretheren or sisters shall fast, every one on the one shall receive *id.* for their pittance and allowance. And every one of the 11 bretheren or sisters every principall day of the yeare, viz. Epiphany, Easter, and Whit-Sunday, and All Saints', shall receive 2*d.* for their pittance. And every 4 of the foresaid 13 bretheren or sisters on the feast of St. Michael shall receive one goose, or so much money, etc., to the vlew. And every of the foresaid 13 bretheren or sisters yearly, 3 ells of cloth of pure russet, suffitient for one garment, or else 3*s.* of money.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1770: Polynesia

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks.

“*Streights of Sunda*” In the proa were some small turtle, many fowls and ducks, also parrots, paroquets, Rice birds and monkees, some few of which we bought at the rate of a dollar for a small turtle, the same at first for 10 afterwards for 15 large fowls, two Monkees or a whole cage of Paddy birds.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1704: America

Sarah Knight set off on horseback from Boston for a journey to New York on October 2, to see to some business. The return journey occupied five months. “Madame Knight” recorded some of the details of her trip in a journal. On the first morning on the road, she wrote:

Tuesday, October ye third, about 8 in the morning, I with the Post proceeded forward without observing any thing remarkable; And about two, on, Arrived at the Post's second stage, where the western Post mett him and exchanged Letters. Here, having called for something to eat, ye woman bro't in a Twisted thing like a cable, but something whiter; and laying it on the bord, tugg'd for life to bring it into a capacity to spread; wch having wth great pains accomplished, shee serv'd in a dish of Pork and Cabage, I suppose the remains of Dinner. The course was of a deep Purple, wch I tho't

suppose the remains of Dinner. The sause was of a deep Purple, wch I tho t was boil'd in her dye Kettle; the bread was Indian, and every thing on the Table service Agreeable to these. I, being hungry, gott a little down; but my stomach was soon cloy'd, and what cabbage I swallowed serv'd me for a Cudd the whole day after.

. . . Being come to mr. Havens', I was very civilly Received, and courteously entertained, in a clean comfortable House; and the Good woman was very active in helping off my Riding clothes, and then ask't what I would eat. I told her I had some Chocolett, if shee would prepare it; which with the help of some Milk, and a little clean brass Kettle, she soon effected to my satisfaction. I then betook me to my Apartment, wch was a little Room parted from the Kitchen by a single bord partition; where, after I had noted the Occurrances of the past day, I went to bed, which, tho' pretty hard, Yet neet and handsome.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1881: USA

From the fieldwork diary of Alice Cunningham Fletcher, which she published as *Camping with the Sioux*.

Corn gathered in the hard milk, a little too hard for our cooking but not ripe, then pull back the husk, and braid the husk and stalk and dry it. When they eat it they thrust a sharp stick down the cob, hold it on the coals and roast it. Corn has dark kernels on it, known as "squaw corn."

OCTOBER 4

POISON SQUAD SONG

1903: USA

The Poison Squad experiment of 1902 (see December 20) generated a lot of interest, and quite a number of songs. Some were written for the inevitable series of dinners which followed the experiment, including the following, which was performed on this day by Lew Dockstader in Washington, DC.

If ever you should visit the Smithsonian Institute,
Look out that Professor Wiley doesn't make you a recruit
He's got a lot of fellows there that tell him how they feel,
They take a batch of poison every time they eat a meal.
For breakfast they get cyanide of liver, coffin shaped,
For dinner, undertaker's pie, all trimmed with crepe;
For supper, arsenic fritters, fried in appetizing shade,
And late at night they get a prussic acid lemonade.

(Chorus)

They may get over it, but they'll never look the same.
That kind of a bill of fare would drive most men insane.
Next week he'll give them moth balls,
a LA Newburgh, or else plain.
They may get over it, but they'll never look the same.

ACE HIGH DISHES

1936: USA

Amelia Earhart was not just a Flying Ace (*see* **May 20, July 2**); it seems that she was a dab hand in the kitchen too. This day's edition of the magazine *This Week* featured an interview with Earhart and her husband, under the header "Ace-High Dishes."

At home when she has time she can set before you tempting dishes cooked by her own competent hands. . . . She makes especially good fudge. Or get yourself invited to one of the Sunday night suppers she prepares. Then you will realize that honors in the kitchen as well as in the air, might be

will realize that honors in the kitchen as well as in the air, might be bestowed on Amelia Earhart, the comely daughter of the Middle West, who was destined to become America's heroine of the year.

"Speaking of desserts," Amelia's husband interpolates, "I might say that my own infantile preference for chocolate cornstarch is responsible for the frequent appearance of that, to me, delectable dish. There's probably been more chocolate cornstarch on our table than on any other table in the world. We like rice, too, served with cream and sugar. And baked bananas stand high in our favour, sometimes as dessert and sometimes as an accompaniment."

Here is one of Amelia's recipes:

Sour-Cream Waffles

If you like crisp waffles that will hold their crispness, here is a recipe which should prove satisfactory.

- 2 cups sifted flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 2 eggs separated
- 2 cups sour, heavy cream

Mix and sift dry ingredients. Combine well-beaten egg yolks and cream; add to flour mixture, beating until smooth. Fold in stiffly beaten egg whites. Bake in hot waffle iron. Approximate yield: 5 waffles.

FOOD & WAR

1941: Norway, World War II

The Reich government warned the people of Norway to comply with the rules under occupation or face starvation.

1942: Berlin, World War II

Adolf Hitler decreed that that occupied countries would make up the food shortage caused by the Allied blockade.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1805: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day Joseph Whitehouse wrote: “[O]ur hunters killed nothing this day. Some of the men eat a fat dog.”

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1795

George Washington, in a letter to Thomas Jefferson on this day.

But of all the improving and ameliorating crops, none, in my opinion, is equal to Potatoes on stiff, & hard land such as mine. From a variety of instances I am satisfied that on such land, a crop of Potatoes is equal to an ordinary dressing. In no instance have I failed of good Wheat, Oats, or clover that followed Potatoes. And I conceid they give the soil a darker hue.

1881: USA

From the fieldwork diary of Alice Cunningham Fletcher, published as *Camping with the Sioux*: “Rose not very early—cloudy, but think it wont rain, and will push on. This A.M. at breakfast, a royal one of eggs, potatoes, fried in butter, coffee and white bread.”

OCTOBER 5

SAINT FAITH'S EVE

England

The eve of St. Faith's Day was one of a number of auspicious times for prognostication rituals—especially in the case of young women wishing to get a glimpse of their future husbands. The rituals varied a little from place to place, but generally involved “St. Faith's Cakes.” In one version, three girls would combine their talents and mix a simple cake of flour, salt, sugar, and water, and bake it on a griddle. Each girl would turn it three times during the cooking. When it was cooked, the cake would be cut into three and each girl's share cut into three times three pieces. Each of the nine pieces for each girl would be passed three times through the wedding ring of a woman married (presumably happily) for seven years. Each girl then ate her nine pieces while she recited:

O good St Faith, be kind tonight

And bring to me my heart's delight

Let me my future husband view

And be my vision chaste and true.

The ring would be hung from the bed-head, and the girls would hope to dream of their future husbands.

A WEDDING FEAST

1600: Florence, Italy

The feast which followed the marriage by proxy of Maria de Medici and the future Henry IV of France was said at the time to have been the most opulent in the history of Florence—which was saying a great deal in a region noted for its wealth and extravagance. The feast was given by Maria's uncle, Ferdinand I, it was orchestrated by the famous architect Bernardo Buontalenti, and it was held in the *Salone Cinquecento* of the *Palazzo Vecchio*.

As the three hundred guests opened up their napkins, tiny songbirds hidden in their folds were released. Then followed a spectacular feast of over sixty dishes.

First there were twenty-four cold dishes (plus many salads and other side dishes), then twenty-eight hot dishes which included pheasants, capons, quail, thrushes, and skylarks, as well as roasted piglets. The finale included many sweet dishes, including—most amazingly in an era long before refrigeration—a frozen “sherbert” of milk and honey, a precursor of modern gelati and ice cream.

As the backdrop to the feast there were huge sugar sculptures of allegorical animals and mythical scenes such as the labours of Hercules. Sugar was incredibly expensive at the time, and the cost of these alone must have been astronomical.

A HOT DOG POEM

1895: Yale University, USA

The *Yale Record* edition of this day included a poem about “The Kennel Club,” a campus lunch wagon which sold sausages in buns—which students were already calling “dogs.”

ECHOES FROM THE LUNCH WAGON

“Tis dogs’ delight to bark and bite,”

Thus does the adage run.

But I delight to bite the dog

When placed inside a bun.

On October 19, the same paper published a short piece of fiction about the theft of the wagon and its owner, who subsequently woke to find himself in the middle of a chapel service, and went on to sell his wares to the congregation, who “contentedly munched hot dogs during the whole service.”

See September 28.

PRIZE HAM

1850: USA

The *Scientific American* edition published on this day gave instructions for a prize-winning ham.

Montgomery Prize Ham

Mr. Nathan White, of Montgomery County, Maryland, gives the following as the recipe by which the prize ham at the late Fair was cured:

The pork should be perfectly cold before being cut up. The hams should be salted with bloom salt, with a portion of red pepper, and about a gill of molasses to each ham. Let them remain in salt five weeks; then hang them up, and smoke with hickory wood for five or six weeks. About the first of April take them down, and wet them with cold water, and let them be well rubbed with unleached ashes. Let them remain in bulk for several days, and then hang them in the loft again for use.

THE BREAD MARCH

1789: France

An angry mob, predominantly made up of women, marched twenty kilometers from Paris to the King's palace at Versailles, in the rain, in yet another protest at the scarcity of bread. It is said that the women chanted as they marched, "*Allons chercher le boulanger, la boulangère et le petit mitron!*" (Let's find the baker, the baker, and the baker's boy.) Louis did in fact agree to their demand that he return to Paris, which played into the hands of the revolutionaries perfectly.

FOOD & THE LAW

1919: Norway

A referendum on the introduction of alcohol prohibition was held in Norway on October 5 and 6. Partial prohibition (of spirits only) had been in force since 1917. The proposal was accepted by almost 62 percent of the voters. It was overturned after a second referendum in 1926.

FOOD & WAR

1952: Britain, Post–World War II

Tea rationing ended, after twelve years. The *Times* reported:

These domestic changes follow the starting again of public tea auctions and of re-exports, so that London may once more play its full part in an international trade of great value to the Commonwealth. . . .

The thought of what the world must have been like before tea came in was, long ago, dismissed as unthinkable. The Minister of Food may be congratulated on having been able to free so popular a prisoner from the gaol of rationing.

SOYER'S STOVE

1855: Crimean Peninsula

Alexis Soyer's most enduring invention was his field stove. The design was so effective that with very little adaptation, it was still being used by the British Army in the Gulf War nearly 150 years later.

Soyer later described the stove in a letter to the editor of the *Times* which was published on this day.

Each apparatus will contain a cauldron holding 12½ gallons. Two of the apparatus will easily cook for a company of 100, and even more, if required, and both stoves can be carried by one mule, and loaded inside with sufficient dry wood for two days' consumption for a full company, whereas an additional quantity of fuel for one day's further consumption may be carried outside between the apparatus on the animal's back. The weight would then be 60lb under the full charge of a mule. The cauldron is made of such a material as not to require tinning, and the saving of fuel is remarkable, being above eight-ninths under the old system, the allowance to each man being 4½lb of wood during the spring and summer months, which were formerly consumed for cooking only. Therefore, taking two full companies of 100 each, a saving would be effected on that comparatively small number of upwards of 800lb of fuel, while upon an army consisting of 30,000 the saving is enormous. These stoves will also burn any kind of fuel, and are entirely free from smoke.

The most important considerations are the reduction in the shipping, the land transport, the number of mules, and the numerous labourers usually employed for such a daily purpose, besides the removal of the vast difficulty of distribution over the camp in bad weather. Another advantage to be gained is that the cooks employed in each company will have but a few pounds of fuel to saw and split, instead of several hundreds. Next, the facility in cooking will give a taste to soldiers to follow M. Soyer's system of cooking, which they are now acquiring, and the food will be much more nutritious by being cooked in large quantities, as the lesser evaporation takes place. N.B. The apparatus can cook in the open air and resist the action of any weather or climate, and from its extreme simplicity of construction will last for years, never getting out of order, except by wilful damage or accident. In the winter season two of these apparatus, which will cook for a full company, might be placed in large wooden huts occupied by 50 or 60 men, and the cooking being conducted therein will thoroughly warm the place in every part, and thereby obviate the necessity of other fire.

When no longer required for camp cookery the stove can be applied to any public establishment, such as workhouses, schools, barracks hospitals, prisons, asylums colleges &c.

When a regiment is stationary four men, with six assistant cooks may cook with ease for a thousand men. The camp stove is moderate in price, and will be found much more economical than the present camp kettle, which requires replacing every two or three months and is utterly impracticable to cook with in wet, snowy, or stormy weather, except under shelter.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1805: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day William Clark wrote: “Nothing to eat except dried fish & roots. Capt Lewis & myself ate a Supper of roots boiled, which Swelled us in Such a manner that we were Scercely able to breath for Several hours.”

1844: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

We followed the chain of lagoons for about seven miles, in a west by south direction; the country to our right was most beautiful, presenting detached Bricklow groves, with the Myal, and with the Vitex in full bloom, surrounded by lawns of the richest grass and herbage; the partridge pigeon (*Geophaps scripta*) abounded in the Acacia groves; the note of the Wonga Wonga (*Leucosarcia picata*, Gould.) was heard; and ducks and two pelicans were seen on the lagoons. Blackfellows had been here a short time ago: large unio shells were abundant; the bones of the codfish, and the shield of the fresh-water turtle, showed that they did not want food. A small orange tree, about 5–8 minutes high, grows either socially or scattered in the open scrub, and a leafless shrub, belonging to the Santalaceae, grows in oblong detached low thickets. Chenopodiaceous plants are always frequent where the Myal grows. The latitude of our camp was 26 degrees 56 minutes 11 seconds.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1603: Yorkshire, England

Lady Margaret Hoby, a devout upper-class woman, kept a diary primarily to aid her spiritual growth, but occasionally she included a note about some household or other matter, such as in her entry on this day in which she refers to the unseasonably warm weather, which had caused the artichokes to “bear twice.” The weather may have also assisted the spreading of the plague then rampant in the country.

We had in our Gardens a second sommer, for Harteckes bare twisse, whitt Rosses, Read Rosses : and we, hauinge sett a musk Rose the winter before, it bare flowers now. I thinke the like hath seldom binnseene : it is a great frute yeare all over.

1856: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau.

To Hill and over the nastures westward.

Sally Cummings and Mike Murray are out on the Hill collecting apples and nuts. Do they not rather belong to such children of nature than to those who have merely bought them with their money? There are few apples for them this year, however, and it is too early for walnuts (too late for hazelnuts). The grapes are generally gone, and their vines partly bare and yellowed, though without frost.

1889: USA

The warden of the penitentiary at Eddyville Kentucky wrote in his journal on this day:

Prisoner Burton, #152, caused a disturbance in the three-block dining area at the evening meal hour. He loudly claimed his beans were unfit to eat and splattered the contents of his bowl against the wall. He was in the process of doing further harm when he was overpowered by several alert Keepers and dragged away. He is presently chained up in the dungeon where I am sure he will cause very little mischief. I am glad to report no other prisoner was involved.

OCTOBER 6

WORLD SPEECH

1892: Worcester, USA

The Volapükakluba Nolümelopik (North America World's Speech Club) held a dinner on this day and the menu was written in the new artificial language. There were a number of artificial languages developed in the nineteenth century, the most enduring of which is probably that of Esperanto.

Volapük ("World's Speech") was developed by a German priest, Johan Martin Schleyer, and became very popular throughout Europe and America in the nineteenth century, until eclipsed in popularity by Esperanto.

Zibalised.

-- .

Huits.

Sup Tomatik.

KALOKIKS.

Xolamit

Jipamit.

Läened

Xalalineg.

LOETOTS.

Babamit Pelocentil

Legok Melopik

Lullmamanit Pehakod

Säläd Sanagokik

Pods in Meilavat

Huits Pekukö

FOOD & WAR

1944: Berlin, Germany, World War II

Joseph Goebbels, the Nazi minister of propaganda, announced a series of new decrees on this day. He told housewives to expect less bread, coffee, and cooking fats, and the Nazi party to expect fewer meetings and parades, fewer decorations, and no more new appointments.

U.S. STATE FOOD

1965: Ohio

The state legislature on this day signed into law that “[t]he canned, processed juice and pulp of the fruit of the herb *Lycopersicon esculentum*, commonly known as tomato juice, is hereby adopted as the official beverage of the state.” This decision coincided with the annual tomato festival held in Reynoldsburg, Ohio.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt’s journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia.

Whilst we were at our last camp, Charley met a long file of native women returning, with their dillies and baskets full of shell fish, to the range; near which, very probably, fresh water existed. We saw their numerous tracks and a footpath leading to the river; and heard their cooees round our present camp, which may have interfered with one of their camping places.

1866: Africa

From David Livingstone’s journal of his expedition to find the source of the Nile. He was in the region of Lake Nyasa, and being entertained by his old friend the chief Kimsusa.

It was very hot. Kimsusa behaved like a king. His strapping wives came to carry the loads and shame his people. One wife carried beer, another meal, and as soon as we arrived cooking commenced . . . if I could have used his beer I could have put some fat on my bones, but it requires a stong digestion. Many of the chiefs and their wives live on it almost entirely.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1663: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys. Every five weeks it was washing day; extra help was usually brought in—and Samuel found the whole day very inconvenient.

[M]y wife waked to ring the bell to call up our mayds to the washing about 4 o'clock [dinner time]. . . . But was vexed that it was washing day, we had no meat dressed; but sent to the cook's and my people had so little wit to send our meat from abroad in the cook's dishes, which were marked with the name of the Cooke upon them; by which, if they observed anything, they might know it was not my own dinner.

1779: England

John Wesley started a tour of England and Scotland in mid-March, and by this day was in Winchester. "At eleven I preached in Winchester where there are four thousand five hundred French prisoners. I was glad to find they have plenty of wholesome food and are treated, in all respects, with great humanity."

The prison population had grown significantly since the prison reformer John Howard had visited there on March 2, 1779, at which time he wrote:

There were a thousand and sixty-two French prisoners in the prison at Winchester, March 2, 1779. The wards are lofty and spacious. The area large. The meat and beer were good, but the bread (being made with leaven and mixed with rye) was not so good as that at Bristol.

OCTOBER 7

THE RUSSIAN FAMINE

1921: Brussels

The International Russian Famine Relief Conference, made up of representatives from eighteen nations, met to discuss the serious situation in Russia, and what might be done to help. The famine began in the spring of 1921, and lasted throughout 1922, and killed an estimated six million people.

Dr. Fridjof Nansen, of Polar exploration fame, was high commissioner. In an interview, he said that saving Russia from famine would also solve the world's unemployment problem, and that although the Soviet government was doing everything in its power, it was incapable of saving its people without foreign aid.

FOOD & WAR

1571: The Battle of Lepanto

The ships of the Holy League—a coalition of Catholic maritime states—defeated their Ottoman enemies in a five-hour battle off Western Greece, near the port of Lepanto. It is said that at one stage during the battle, the crew of one of the Ottoman ships, having run out of ammunition, began using their supplies of oranges and lemons as missiles. The Christian crews on the receiving end apparently threw them back—perhaps because of their unfamiliarity with the fruit.

FOOD FIRSTS

1892: USA

The earliest known reference to chocolate mousse in print in America occurs in a report in the *New York Times* of this date.

There were 8,000 persons at the Food Exposition at Madison Square Garden yesterday, and the attendance at the great show grows day by day as popular interest increases. People go there to see the attractive displays of food products. . . . Miss Parloa lectured in the afternoon on “Lobster a la Newberg,” Welsh rarebit, and chocolate mousse.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1691: Britain

The first patent for a method of food preservation granted in Britain (No. 278) was to Thomas Porter and John White.

[A] grant unto them of the sole use, exercise, and benefit of their new invention of keeping and preserving by liquors and otherwise all sorts of flesh, fowle, and fish, and many other things, either in pieces or in whole bodyes, at a cheaper rate, for many years in all clymates, without changing the nature, quality, taste, smell, or colour thereof, as good, palatable, and wholesome, to be eaten and made use of for any intent and purpose

whatsoever, as when first killed and put into such liquor; to hold and enjoy the same for 14 years, according to the statute.

Details of the process were not supplied. As far as is known, this patent, which was based solely on the use of heat, was never widely applied.

FOOD BUSINESS

1895

Charles W. Post for the Postum Cereal Company (the predecessor of General Foods, which was later bought by Kraft foods) filed for trademark registration for Postum, a cereal-based beverage marketed as a coffee alternative.

A large part of Post's marketing strategy for his cereal and molasses product was to create a fear of the effects of coffee drinking. He claimed that coffee would wear away the lining of the stomach, cause heart trouble and "nerves," and even that it could cause blindness. His product, on the other hand, did none of those things, but soothed and "made red blood." It became an enormously popular product, particularly when an instant variety was made in 1911, but was discontinued by Kraft in 2007.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1811: USA

From the journal of Wilson Price Hunt's overland expedition in 1811–1812:
"We saw many herds of antelopes. Wild cherries are common, about the size of ordinary red cherries, but they were not yet ripe."

1844: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia. They found evidence of aboriginal methods of food-collecting.

The well-known tracks of Blackfellows are everywhere visible; such as trees recently stripped of their bark, the swellings of the apple-tree cut off to make vessels for carrying water, honey cut out, and fresh steps cut in the

trees to climb for opossums.

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia.

John and Charley went back to fetch the bullock, and, in the mean time, I occupied myself in examining our packs, in order to dispense with such things as were least necessary; for, with an additional weight of 130 pounds of dried meat and hide, our pack bullocks were overloaded, and it was now imperative upon me to travel as lightly as possible. Thus I parted with my paper for drying plants, with my specimens of wood, with a small collection of rocks, made by Mr. Gilbert, and with all the duplicates of our zoological specimens. Necessity alone, which compelled me to take this step, reconciled me to the loss.

Our bullock came in during the afternoon, and was immediately killed, skinned, and quartered.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1664: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys: "Lay pretty while, with some discontent, abed, even to having bad words with my wife, and blows too, about the ill serving-up of our victuals yesterday, but all ended in love."

1794: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde. He has a second breakfast on this day.

[T]o Mr. Jeans's where we made a second tho' late breakfast with Mr. & Mrs. Jeans, the Bishop of Norwich Dr. Charles Sutton and his Chaplain, Mr. Thoroton a young Man, and half brother to the Bishop who married his Sister. We had for breakfast, Chocolate, green & brown Tea, hot Rolls, dried Toast, Bread and Butter, Honey, Tongue and ham grated very small. . . . We attended him (the Bishon) to Church . . . Dined at Mr Priests . . .

. . . We attended him (the Bishop) to Church . . . Dined at Mr. Frost's . . .
Dinner to day Leg of Mutton boiled & a Couple of Ducks roasted, and a
baked rice Pudding.

Woodforde's "Second Breakfast" is an opportunistic event on this day, but in some times and places the concept is quite formal. The novelist Sybille Bedford spent much of her life in Europe, and in her novel *A Legacy*, which is set among a community of wealthy Berlin Jews, she describes the German interpretation of this meal, which is too early for lunch and too substantial for a mid-morning snack:

They were at second breakfast. Second breakfast was laid every morning at eleven-fifteen on a long table in the middle of the Herrenzimmer, a dark, fully furnished room with heavily draped windows that led from an antechamber to an antechamber. The meal was chiefly for the gentlemen. They ate cold Venison with red-currant jelly, potted meats, tongue and fowl accompanied by pumpernickel toast and rye-bread, and they drank port wine. Grandmama sat with them. She had a newly-laid egg done in cream, and nibbled at some soft rolls with *Spickgans*, smoked breast of goose spread on butter and chopped fine. Grandpapa had a hot poussin-chicken baked for him every day in a small dish with a lid; and Cousin Markwald who had a stomach ailment ate cream of wheat, stewed sweetbreads and a special kind of rusks.

Second Breakfast was also enthusiastically embraced in early nineteenth-century Jamaica. See Lady Nugent's diary entry on **March 25**.

1808: England

Jane Austen wrote to her sister Cassandra.

Castle Square.

You know of course that Martha comes to-day, yesterday brought us notice of it, and the spruce beer is brewed in consequence.

Martha is very happy to be returned. . . . She brings several good things for the larder, which is now very rich; we had a pheasant and hare the other day from the Mr. Grays of Alton. Is this to entice us to Alton, or to keep us away?

OCTOBER 8

FAST FOOD

1998: Belarus

Leaders of the former Soviet republic leveled the playing field for the fast-food industry by removing the tax and customs advantages enjoyed by McDonald's restaurants.

Donald's has not created a single enterprise here as provided for by our agreement. It therefore has no right to any preferential treatment.

Enterprise and Investment Minister Aleksander Sazonov

FOOD & WAR

1870: Paris, France

During the Siege of Paris, an anonymous "Besieged Resident" (M. Henry Labouchere) kept up a regular correspondence via carrier-pigeons with the English *Daily News*. He provided a lengthy commentary on this day, much of which related to the shortage of fresh meat.

From Monday next a new system of the distribution of meat is to come into force. Between 450 and 500 oxen and 3,500 sheep are to be daily slaughtered. This meat is to be divided into twenty lots, one for each arrondissement, the size of each lot to be determined by the number of the inhabitants of the particular arrondissement. The lot will then be divided between the butchers in the arrondissement, at twenty centimes per kilogram below the retail price. Each arrondissement may, however, adopt a system of rations. I suspect most of the beef I have eaten of late is horse; anyhow, it does not taste like ordinary beef. To obtain a joint at home is almost impossible. In the first place, it is difficult to purchase it; in the second place, if, when bought, it is spotted by patriots going through the street, it is seized upon on the ground that any one who can obtain a joint for love or money must be an aristocrat who is getting more than his share.

I met a lady early this morning, who used to be most fashionable. She was walking along with a parcel under her shawl, and six dogs were following her. She asked me to drive them away, but they declined to go. I could not understand their sudden affection for my fair friend, until she confided to me that she had two pounds of mutton in her parcel.

POTATO BREAD

1778

Benjamin Franklin received a letter, written on this day by Antoine-Alexis Cadet de Vaux, a French chemist.

Monsieur, I have the honor of sending you a loaf of potato bread, made without a single atom of flour and without the addition of any other foreign substance.

This discovery, so precious and interesting, is due to M. Parmentier, my colleague and friend; both of us, working together on this project, are trying now to bring it to the point of perfection of which it is capable, and thus to assure a resource to humanity in times of famine.

This bread differs little from wheaten-bread in its whiteness, its flavor, and its delicacy; and to its advantage it needs neither mills nor millers. I am not even speaking of the ease of cultivating potatoes, or the price of the bread: the white bread would not cost even 6d and the brown would cost 9 deniers at most.

I will seek the honor of waiting on you, Monsieur, and enter into the details that you will want about this subject which could only but interest a philosopher, a friend of mankind, and a legislator such as yourself. I am, with the deepest respect and the most sincere admiration, Monsieur, Your very humble and obedient servant.

Cadet le J, Rue St.Antoine.

p.s. This bread has been exposed to a high temperature while in the oven, which makes it less pleasant to the eye, an inconvenience which practice

will prevent. I have taken the liberty of enclosing a second loaf which I ask Monsieur Franklin to have sent to Madame Helvétius; it will have much more merit coming on his behalf.

Endorsed: Cadet Potato bread

Cadet did not include the recipe for Parmentier's bread in his letter, but it was widely circulated at the time.

A method to make Potatoe-Bread without the admixture of flour.

By M.Parmentier, of the College of Pharmacy, Paris.

Take five pounds of dried starch, and five pounds of pulp; dissolve a suitable quantity of leaven or yeast in warm water the eve or night before. The mixture being exactly made, let it lie all night in the kneading-trough, well covered and kept warm until the next day; this is the second leaven; then add five pounds more of starch, and the same quantity of pulp, and knead it well. The water must be in proportion as a fifth part, that is to say, that upon twenty pounds of paste there must be five pounds of water. You must observe that the water be used as hot as possible.

The paste being completely kneaded, it must be divided into small loaves: this bread requires slow preparation, and the oven must be equally and moderately heated: it will require two hours baking.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1770: At Sea

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks.

“off Batavia Road” . . . very soon after a small Indian boat came alongside, having in her 3 turtle, some dry fish and pumkins. We bought his turtle which weighd all together 146 lb for a dollar, with which bargain he seemd well pleasd, but could scarcely be prevaild upon to take any other Coin for his Pumpkins, often desiring that we would cut a dollar and give him a part; at last however a Portugese Petacka shining and well coind tempted him to part with his stock which consisted of 26.

1835: Galapagos

From Charles Darwin's journal of the voyage of the *Beagle*.

We arrived at James Island. . . . Mr. Bynoe, myself, and our servants were left here for a week, with provisions and a tent, whilst the *Beagle* went for water. We found here a party of Spaniards, who had been sent from Charles Island to dry fish, and to salt tortoise-meat. . . . While staying in this upper region, we lived entirely upon tortoise-meat: the breastplate roasted (as the Gauchos do *carne con cuero*), with the flesh on it, is very good; and the young tortoises make excellent soup; but otherwise the meat to my taste is indifferent.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1672: England

John Evelyn mentions the famous fire-eater, Richardson, in his diary entry for this day.

I took leave of my Lady Sunderland, who was going to Paris to my Lord, now Ambassador there. She made me stay dinner at Leicester House, and afterwards sent for Richardson, the famous fire-eater. He devoured brimstone on glowing coals before us, chewing and swallowing them; he melted a beere-glass and ate it quite up; then taking a live coale on his tongue he put on it a raw oyster; the coal was blown on with bellows till it flamed and sparkled in his mouthe, and so remained until the oyster gaped and was quite boil'd.

Then he melted pitch and wax with sulphur, which he drank down as it flamed: I saw it flaming in his mouthe a good while; he also took up a thick piece of iron, such as laundresses use to put in their smoothing-boxes, when it was fiery hot, held it between his teeth, then in his hand, and threw it about like a stone; but this I observ'd he cared not to hold very long. Then he stode on a small pot, and, bending his body, tooke a glowing iron with his mouthe from betweene his feete, without touching the pot or ground with his hands, with divers other prodigious feats.

1856: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau: “Sophia brings home two or three clusters of very large freshly ripe thimble-berries, with some unripe, a second crop, apparently owing to the abundance of rain for the last six weeks.”

1888: France

Vincent van Gogh wrote (but did not send this letter) to his brother Theo from Arles on this day:

Thanks for your letter, but I have had a very thin time of it these days, as my money ran out on Thursday, so it was a damnably long time till Monday noon. These four days I have lived mainly on 23 cups of coffee, with bread which I still have to pay for. It's not your fault, it's mine if it's anyone's. Because I was wild to see my pictures in frames, and I had ordered too many for my budget, seeing that the month's rent and the charwoman also had to be paid.

1918: France, World War I

Future president Harry Truman was on active military duty in France, and while he was away he wrote regularly to his sweetheart and future wife, Bess Wallace. The following letter was written “somewhere in France.”

The heroes are all in the infantry. When a man goes up with them he really does something. We are only their supporters and don't get much real action. The easiest and safest place for a man to get is in the air service. They fly around a couple of hours a day, sleep in a featherbed every night, eat hotcakes and maple syrup for breakfast, pie and roast beef for supper every day, spend their vacations in Paris or wherever else it suits their fancy, and draw 20 percent extra pay for doing it.

OCTOBER 9

BLACKBERRY-PICKING

England

This is traditionally the last day to pick blackberries in England. According to legend, tomorrow's date (St Michael's Day according to the old calendar) is the day on which the devil was tossed out from heaven, and landed on a blackberry bush, whereupon he spat on it in anger—and no-one would want to eat berries with devil spittle on them!

A VEGETARIAN DINNER

1884: London

The Vegetarian Society gave a dinner in the restaurant carried on under their direction in the Health Exhibition. The menu included:

- Soups: tomato and rice and lentil
- Entrees: green (sugar) corn, or young maize, oaten grits, and macaroni au gratin
- Removes: bruised haricots, savoury omelette, curried mushrooms and rice, and bread fritters
- Entremets: boiled chestnuts, samp pudding, and vegetable marrow au gratin
- Vegetables: Brussels sprouts, potatoes, Jerusalem artichokes, and baked turnips
- Sweets: barley pudding, Ceylon pudding, apple and damson tart, vegetable custard, Iceland moss jelly, and pineapple; stewed fruits—pears, apricots, French plum
- Dessert: in addition to several varieties of grapes, pears, apples, and nuts, there were served bananas, Spanish melons, green-gage tomatoes, and Brazilian oranges
- The beverages, besides lemonade, seltzer, and zoedone, were palatable unfermented concoctions, such as sparkling hop and morella, pear and other so-called fruit champagnes

FOOD & WAR

1947: Britain, Post–World War II

The Food Ministry announced that the bacon ration would be halved from October 19, to two ounces per person per fortnight, due to a strike in bacon factories in Canada (which was already in its sixth week). The ministry warned that, should the strike go on indefinitely, it might not be possible to maintain even that small bacon allowance.

On the same day, Mr. Bevin, the foreign secretary, also warned of the possibility of potato rationing. In an address to the Earlsfield Women’s Co-operative Guild, he said: “We are considering how to distribute our available potatoes. I don’t know whether we shall have to ration them, but I would rather do that than let one section of the community have them all. . . . I don’t call these cuts.”

During 1947 in Britain, rationing was more severe than at any time during the war itself. When asked about the government’s austerity plans at the meeting, Mr. Bevin said:

I don’t call these cuts. What we are doing is making an adjustment. We are determined to see that every penny that is available is spent on the nutrition of the people to keep the standard of health up. I have been trying to adjust these difficulties. The Soviets accuse me of wanting to be under the domination of the United States, and the Americans accuse me of wanting to get too much out of them. You can put your penny in the slot and wait for the result.

I do not believe that this adjustment is very difficult. What is needed is understanding, good will, and an effort on everybody’s part. We are acting very much like a reasonable mother and father would act in managing a home.

As the date grew closer, the *Times* of October 16 offered the following reflection on the bacon shortage:

Lament for Bacon

In a sombre world we miss more acutely those little flashes of happiness which can lighten the gloom, and so the halving from next Sunday of the

which can lighten the gloom, and so the having none next Sunday of the already meagre ration of bacon is a hard blow. Bacon is sweet at all times, but even as fruit is said to be golden in the morning, so is bacon for breakfast. It is then that it announces its coming by a subtle and pervasive odour. Then the householder stepping grumpily from the bathroom, with no enthusiasm for the day's task, suddenly detects that fragrant herald and makes a scramble of his dressing. "Here's to thee, bacon," he exclaims. . . . He may like it frizzled almost to dryness, so that it can be eaten not indelicately with the fingers, or he may prefer a more unctuous treatment, with rich juice that must be mopped up with bread lest a drop of the precious liquid be wasted. That is a matter of taste, but in either instance, it makes the most heartening of all starts to a new day. . . .

Our allowance was paltry before and now it will be almost wholly illusory. It will be futile to try to spin it out. Far better to save our bacon for one breakfast of frenzied happiness in the fortnight, and then smart in the fires of abstinences till the brief moment of repletion comes "slow, how slowly" round again.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769: Polynesia

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks.

"*Taoneroa*" . . . Our dinner came, they expressed a curiosity to taste whatever they saw us eat, and did; salt pork seemd to please them better than any thing else, of this they eat a good deal. At sunset they eat again an enormous quantity of Bread and drank above a quart of water each.

1805: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day Patrick Gass wrote: "We have some Frenchmen, who prefer dog-flesh to fish; and they here got two or three dogs from the Indians."

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1660: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

I found Mr. Prin a good, honest, plain man, but in his discourse not very free or pleasant. Among all the tales that passed among us to-day, he told us of one Damford, that, being a black man, did scald his beard with mince-pie, and it came up again all white in that place, and continued to his dying day.

1797: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde:

Mrs. Beevor of Witchingham with a Mrs. Whalley an agreeable Married Lady from Colchester made us a Morning Visit—very pleasing agreeable ladies. They eat some Cake and drank a Glass of our Mead. Dinner to day, fried Eels and heatups—in short odds.

OCTOBER 10

CRANBERRIES AND MAIZE FOR THE KING

1677: Colonial America

The records of the Massachusetts General Court show that an order was made on this day that the treasurer would provide the king (Charles II of England and its colonies) with ten barrels of cranberries, two hogsheads of their best samp, and three thousand codfish, along with a ship load of masts provided by Maine. Subsequently it is recorded that the king's ship, the *Blessing*, was loaded in Boston on December 22 with 1,860 codfish, 10 barrels of cranberries, and 3 barrels of samp.

Samp is coarsely ground maize, and the porridge made from it. The word comes from the Algonquine *nasamp* and the Narrangsett *nasaump*. A fine description of the use of maize to make a type of porridge appears in the thirteenth edition of *Philosophical Transactions, Giving Some Account of the Present Undertakings, Studies and Labors of the Ingenious in Many Considerable Parts of the World*,

published in 1678.

The Description, Culture, and Use of Maiz. Communicated by Mr. Winthorp

But the best sort of Food which the *English* make of this Corn, is that they call *Samp*. Having first watered it about half an hour, and then beaten it in a Mortar, or else ground it in a Hand or other Mill, into the bigness of Rice, they next lift the Flower [Flour], and Winnow the Hulls from it. Then they boyl it gently, till it be tender, and so with Milk or Butter and Sugar, make it into a very pleasant and wholsom Dish. This was the most usual Diet of the first Planters in these Parts, and is still in use amongst them, as well in Feavers, as in Health: and was often prescribed by the Learned Dr. *Wilson* to his Patients in *London*. And of the Indians that live much upon this Corn, the English most acquainted with them, have been informed by them, That the Disease of the Stone is very seldom known amongst them.

THE TEST TRAIN

1882: Paris, France

A group of specially invited guests set off from Paris' *Gare de l'Est* en route for Vienna aboard the *Train Eclair de Luxe* (lightning luxury train) on this day. The train was the "test train" that would eventually become the Orient Express, and it was the brain-child of Georges Nagelmackers.

The menu for the first meal on board, on October 10, consisted of oysters, soup with Italian pasta, turbot with green sauce, chicken "à la chasseur," fillet of beef with *château* potatoes, *chaudfroid* of game animals, lettuce, chocolate pudding, and a buffet of desserts.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1770: Indonesia

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks:

Batavia (Indonesia): For these rates, which we soon found to be more than

double the common charges of Boarding and lodging in the town, we were furnishd with a Table which under the appearance of Magnificence was wretchedly coverd; indeed Our dinners and suppers consisted of one course each, the one of fifteen the other of thirteen dishes, of which when you came to examine seldom less than 9 or 10 were of Bad Poultreys roasted, boild, fryd, stewd etc.etc. and so little concience had they in serving up dishes over and over again that I have seen the same identical roasted Duck appear upon table 3 times as a roasted duck before he found his way into the fricassee, from whence he was again to Pass into forcemeat.

1805: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day William Clark wrote:

[O]ur diet extremely bad haveing nothing but roots and dried fish to eate, all the Party have greatly the advantage of me, in as much as they all relish the flesh of the dogs, Several of which we purchased of the nativs for to add to our Store of fish and roots \$c. &c.

Dogs were purchased for meat at every opportunity from this point onward. The practice of eating dog meat varied from one Native American tribe to another. For some it was an occasional delicacy, for some a common occurrence, and for others the practice was taboo. Members of the party ate in the order of 263 dogs during the course of the expedition.

1872: Australia

William Hann's exploration of Cape York was in trouble by this date, with exhausted men and few provisions left, but luckily they killed a python. "The head of the Daintree [river] must have been crossed. A snake 16 feet long was shot, and Jerry enjoyed a full meal after his own heart, in which the white members of the party gladly shared."

1811: USA

From the journal of Wilson Price Hunt's overland expedition in 1811–1812:

Mr. Miller left us on the 10th (Oct), with four hunters and four horses, to trap beaver. They took the two Snakes with them and traveled down along the mountainside, hoping to find a tribe of Indians from whom they could get information useful to their hunting. Every evening we caught some beaver and some small salmon trout.

FOOD & WAR

1870: Siege of Paris

The Prussians were attempting to starve the city of Paris. Otto von Bismarck, the minister president of Prussia wrote on this day:

[T]hreatening scarcity of food forces capitulation, the results are bound to be horrifying. . . . Hundreds of thousands [would] die of hunger. The French authorities must be as aware of these consequences as the German army command. . . . If they insist on letting it go to that extreme, then they will also be responsible for what happens.

1917: France, World War I

Elmer M. Johnson of Melville, Montana, wrote on the “camping-out” aspects of the war:

Soissons, October 10, 1917

The experiences of camping-out days in America come into play just now in a most admirable fashion. This is especially the case in the matter of eating and cooking. Thus, we have just been trying to make a hunk of red beef look like porterhouse. We never quite succeed in doing that; but it surely does taste so to us after we have fried it brown just as we like it. Then we pour in the potatoes and onions, heat the coffee, and “hop to it”; and we enjoy the meal. Meat, by the way, is the worst item in the bill of fare here. Our “beef” has too often hauled Paris delivery wagons and responded to whatever is the French equivalent for “Get-up,” and to “Whoa,” which, they tell me, is the one international word. Every nation under the sun stops its horses with “Whoa.”

Last night, being Sunday, we went out and cooked our supper. As usual, every Frenchman who passed by stopped. They always do. At Villers four *poilus*—one of them a young lad from Dunkirk whom I liked especially well, and who spoke a little English bashfully and haltingly—used to come up every night from their camp near by and talk and smoke as we ate and cooked. The young fellow was home on his *permission* when we left; unfortunately, I did n't get to tell him good-bye. Last night among other passers-by were two old men and a little boy. They spoke a queer dialect French which I had great difficulty in understanding. I gathered from what one said that he was very bitter at the high prices civilians had to pay for all provisions; and I understood that he was orating because we, who were "*avec les armées,*" had plenty and could go picnicking with jam and potatoes and meat. To straighten things and square ourselves, we told him that we had paid for everything ourselves and come up there to cook our own supper because we wanted a good meal for a change. But this did n't go; and, after ten minutes, I made out that he was urging Bert and me to come with him, but just why, I couldn't tell; and he grew more noisy and gesticulated more profusely until I finally grasped that he was sorry for us and was inviting us to his farm for supper. His wife would cook us a great kettle of potatoes "*comme ça*"—indicating a "*beaucoup*" quantity—and eggs. Furthermore, he had a little good wine and we need n't drink black coffee; also he had a great admiration for Americans, knew we were helping France, and he wanted to show his appreciation. Then, when we insisted in poor French that we really must go, and thanked him, he orated again. We mustn't be afraid of him. His farm was only a little way off, and there were soldiers close by; he was an old man and had a "*bon cœur,*" vigorously hitting himself on that vital part of his anatomy so that we should be sure to understand him and know that he meant what he said. Besides, he would be honored to have Americans dine with him. By this time our supper was cooked and getting cold, so we had to politely but firmly decline, with the understanding that it would be a pleasure and an honor to accept his kind invitation the next evening. But it rained tonight and we couldn't go. Tomorrow afternoon I shall walk over to his farm, and if he is still in the notion, believe me, I shall accept *avec plaisir*.

This was all typically French.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1735: England

John Wesley, the theologian and evangelist, was about to set off for Georgia (America) to preach to the Indians. He wrote to a friend on this day, describing his motives and intentions.

Toward mortifying “the desire of the flesh,” the desire of sensual pleasures, it will be no small thing to be able, without fear of giving offence, to live on water and the fruits of the earth. This simplicity of food will, I trust, be a blessed means, both of preventing my seeking that happiness in meats and drinks, which God designed should be found only in faith, and love, and joy in the Holy Ghost; and will assist me to attain such purity of thought, as suits a candidate for the state wherein they are as the angels of God in heaven.

1764: Nice, France

From the journal of Tobias Smollett’s *Travels through France and Italy*:

You know all sea-birds are allowed by the church of Rome to be eaten on meagre days, as a kind of fish; and the monks especially do not fail to make use of this permission. The bread of Nice is very indifferent, and I am persuaded very unwholesome.

1805: Cadiz, Spain

Horatio Nelson, aboard the *Victory*, off Cadiz just before the Battle of Trafalgar, sent a series of memoranda to the captains of the fleet in respect of supplies of fresh produce.

To the Respective Captains.

Mem.

It is my particular directions that the Captains and Commanders of His Majesty’s Ships and Vessels under my command, who may purchase bullocks, fresh beef, lemons, onions, or any other species of provisions or refreshments for their respective Companies, whether such purchase is for a particular Ship, or for the Fleet in general, and whether it is made by my

order or otherwise, that a Voucher of the fresh beef, bullocks, &c., so procured for the individual Ship or Fleet, is transmitted to me, immediately the Ship making such purchase shall join the Fleet.

Mem.

Having frequently known that onions have been purchased on account of Government when in Port, where the Pursers could and ought to purchase vegetables to put into the Ships Companies' soup, and that the onions so purchased by Government for recruiting the health of the Ships' Companies, have been used for the benefit of the Purser, by putting these vegetables into the soup, which the Purser should be obliged to purchase when to be procured; it is, therefore, my positive directions that the Pursers are obliged to purchase vegetables for the Ships' soup when it is possible to procure them; and that the Government onions are not used for the soup, if the Purser has the power of obtaining onions or other vegetables, as he is bound to do.

And it is my further directions, that whenever fresh provisions can be procured on reasonable terms, that it is purchased; but that onions, for the account of Government, are not purchased without my orders. Ships, absent for any length of time from me, are at liberty to purchase the gratuitous onions of Government for the recruiting the health of their Ships, Companies, who may have been long fed upon salt provisions.

Mem.

As frequent and very serious mistakes happen on receiving provisions, it is my particular directions, that when any of His Majesty's Ships or Vessels under my command go into Port, to complete their provisions and necessaries, on their coming on board, the Masters take a regular account of each species, &c., which they are to compare with the Bills of Lading sent with such provisions from the Agent Victualler, or Contractor, previous to their entering them in the Log-Book (which is to be done immediately); and afterwards such Bills of Lading, or final Receipts, are to be compared with the Log-Book, before the Captain and signing Officers put their signatures to them, in order that every particle of the provisions so signed for may be actually on board, that Government may not, either from the neglect or mistake of individuals, be defrauded, or the Ships, Companies in want of

those species, considered to be bonafide on board.

It is also my particular directions, that every pound of fresh beef, whether received from Agent Victuallers or Contractors, is weighed on its coming on board, in the presence of a Lieutenant, the Master (or one of his Mates, in his absence on duty), that it is immediately after entered in the Log-Book, and the above instructions duly attended to, before the final Receipts are signed for it accordingly.

The same strict regard to be had to the receipt of fresh beef, or any species of provisions which may be purchased for the use of the Ships, Companies under my command; and on no account whatever to sign Vouchers for such provisions till they are authenticated, and found correct, as the Officers above mentioned will be held answerable for any neglect in the due execution of these instructions.

1870: USA

General Robert E. Lee's wife wrote to Francis H. Smith, superintendent of the Virginia Military Institute, on this day. Two days later, Lee died. "My dear Genl, the Drs. think it would be well for Genl Lee to have some beef tea at once and as I cannot get it at the market before night I send to beg a small piece."

OCTOBER 11

A CHOCOLATE MENU

1870: USA

There was a chocolate dinner (or perhaps supper) at St. Paul's Church Rectory in Brunswick, Maine, on this day.

The Chocolate Menu

Oyster Cream Chocolate

White and Chocolate and Sandwiches

Pressed Chicken

PRESSED CHICKEN

Chocolate Cake

Chocolate Cream

Chocolate Chocolates

IN FLIGHT

1919: England

The first airline meals were served aboard Handley-Page flight from London to Paris. They consisted of pre-packed lunch boxes containing sandwiches, fruit, and chocolate, and were priced at three shillings each.

FOOD & BOOKS

1830: USA

Copyright was formally stated for a cookery book lodged with the clerk of the Northern District of New York on this day.

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on the eleventh day of October, in the fifty-fifth year of the Independence of the United States of America, A.D. 1830, Knowlton & Rice, Booksellers of the said District, have deposited in this Office the title of a book the right whereof they claim as proprietors in the words following, to wit: "The Cook not mad, or Rational Cookery."

In the preface, the author gives his rationale:

A Work on Cookery should be adapted to the meridian in which it is intended to circulate. It is needless to burden a country Cookery Book with receipts for dished depending entirely upon seaboard markets, or which are suitable only to prepare food for the tables of city people, whose habits and customs differ so materially from those living in the country. Still further would the impropriety be carried were we to introduce into a work intended for the American Publick such English, French and Italian methods of rendering things indigestible, which are of themselves innocent, or of distorting and disguising the most loathsome objects to render them

distorting and disguising the most repulsive objects to render them sufferable to already vitiated tastes.

These evils are attempted to be avoided. Good republican dishes and garnishing proper to fill an every day bill of fare, from the condition of the poorest to the richest individual have been principally aimed at.

IN THE NEWS

1999: London

The BBC reported on the Maria Montessori school in Hampstead, which had started to offer lunches which were vegetarian, entirely free of genetically modified ingredients, and organically grown. The meals were provided by a local organic restaurant.

FOOD & THE LAW

1855: France

An enquiry was held into the great increase in price of meat in Paris, and on this day an ordinance appeared in the *Moniteur*, which attempted to remedy the problem. The order stated,

On and after the 16th of the present month, butcher's meat shall be sold at prices taxed by the authorities.

The price shall be fixed every fortnight for every kind of meat, according to the returns made at the *Caisse de Poissy* [the great market which furnished Paris with meat], and to the weight of meat ascertained to have been sent from the public slaughterhouses of Paris during the preceding fortnight.

In the shops established in the markets, meat shall be sold at 10c at least per kilogramme below the fixed price.

FOOD & WAR

1918: USA, the Garrison Ration

General Headquarters of the American Expeditionary Forces issued the following ration order on this day, to be effective on November 1.

On or after November 1, 1918, the kinds and quantities of the components of the rations and the substitutive equivalent articles which may be issued in place of such components to troops of the A.E.F. shall be as follows:

- Beef, fresh: 20 oz. or Substitute (included Sausages, canned pork or Vienna 16 oz., Fish, dried 16 oz. or Fish canned 14oz or Cheese 16 oz. not exceeding 10 percent total issue)
- Bread, soft, 16 oz. or Substitute (Flour, cornmeal, oatmeal or macaroni in lieu of an equal quantity bread, but not exceeding 15 percent of total issue)
- Rice or hominy, 2 oz (Not to exceed 6 issues in 10 days.)
- Beans, dry: 2 oz or Beans, baked 8oz (Not to exceed 4 issues in 10 days.)
- Potatoes: 20 oz. or Onions, fresh, in lieu of an equal quantity of potatoes, but not exceeding 20 percent of total issue (or various other substitutes which were detailed)
- Jam: 3 oz., or Prunes, or evaporated apples, or peaches or apricots, or figs, or dates, or raisins, in lieu of an equal quantity of jam, or Syrup 0.64 gill.
- Coffee: 1.12 oz. or Tea (black or green) 0.32oz
- Sugar: 3.2 oz.
- Milk: 1oz. (This was evaporated, unsweetened milk)
- Butter : or Oleomargarine or lard or lard substitutes 0.5 oz.
- Also pepper, salt, cinnamon, vinegar or pickles (in small quantities)
- Candy: (Issued ½ lb. once in 10 days)

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1805: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day William Clark wrote: “[W]e purchased all the fish we could and Seven dogs of those people for Stores . . . [at another Indian lodge] . . . five dogs . . . [further on] we purchased three dogs.”

1818: Australia

From John Oxley’s journal of his expedition in 1818 to explore the Macquarie River region:

The port abounds with fish: the sharks were larger and more numerous than I ever before observed in any place. We caught one very large one, which we offered to the natives, but they would not touch it. making signs that it would make them ill: our people however found no bad effects from eating it. . . . I named this inlet, Port Macquarie, in honour of His Excellency the Governor, the original promoter of these expeditions.

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt’s journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

We roasted four of our geese for dinner, and they formed by far the most delicious dish our expedition had offered: the others were stewed for the next breakfast; and they were equally good: though a whole night’s stewing might have robbed them of a little of their rich flavour.

FRANKLIN’S MILK PUNCH

1763: America

Benjamin Franklin included his recipe for milk punch in a letter to James Bowodin dated this day:

- 6 quarts of Brandy
- the Rinds of 44 Lemon pared very thin.
- 4 large Nutmegs grated
- 2 quarts of Lemon Juice
- 2 pound of double refined Sugar.
- 4 quarts of Water
- 3 quarts milk

Steep the Rinds in the Brandy 24 Hours; then strain it off. Combine the water, lemon juice, sugar, and nutmeg. When the sugar is dissolved, boil the milk and add it to the mixture as soon as it is removed from the fire. Stir it about and let stand two hours. Pass thro' a jelly bag and bottle.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1793: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde. He was in Bath, where his old neighbors, the Custances then lived: "Sent Briton [his young servant boy] this Evening with a Basket of Game to Mr. and Mrs. Custance No. 1 Portland Place. There were in it a brace of Pheasants & a Hare."

1796: America

From the *Journal of a tour in unsettled parts of North America in 1796 & 1797* by Francis Bailey:

About thirteen miles from Chambersburgh, which we left in the afternoon, is a place called the Mill, which is kept by some Dutchmen. We understood it was a tavern, but were disappointed; however, as it was now dark, and no tavern on the road for some distance, we were under the necessity of begging a lodging here, which was granted us at last with the greatest reluctance. Here we had rather an unfavourable specimen of Dutch

manners. we were kindly directed to take our horses to the stables, and take care of them ourselves, which we accordingly did; and, returning to the house, I was witness to a kind of meal I had never before experienced. First of all, some sour milk was warmed up and placed on the table. This at any other time would probably have made us sick; but having fasted nearly the whole day, and seeing no appearance of anything else likely to succeed it, we devoured it very soon; particularly as the whole family (of which there were seven or eight) partook of it likewise ; all of us sitting round one large bowl, and dipping our spoons in one after another. When this was finished a dish of stewed pork was served up, accompanied with some hot pickled cabbage, called in this part of the country “warm slaw.” This was devoured in the same hoggish manner, every one trying to help himself first, and two or three eating off the same plate, and all in the midst of filth and dirt. After this was removed, a large bowl of cold milk and bread was put on the table, which we partook of in the same manner as the first dish, and in the same disorder. The spoons were immediately taken out of the greasy pork dish, and (having been just cleaned by passing through the mouth) were put into the milk; and that, with all the sang froid necessarily attending such habitual nastiness. Our table, which was none of the cleanest (for as to cloth, they had none in the house), was placed in the middle of the room, which appeared to me to be the receptacle of all the filth and rubbish of the house; and a fine large fire, which blazed at one end, served us instead of a candle.

1797: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde: “Mr. Mellish sent us about 12. lb of Honey—rather old. . . . Dinner to day, Leg of Mutton boiled & Capers &c.”

1813: England

Jane Austen wrote to her aunt Cass:

Godmersham Park. “I knew there was sugar in the tin, but had no idea of there being enough to last through your company. All the better. You ought not to think this new loaf better than the other, because that was the first of five which all came together. Something of fancy, perhaps, and something of Imagination.

Mr. Rob. Mascall breakfasted here; he eats a great deal of butter. I dined upon goose yesterday, which, I hope, will secure a good sale of my second edition. Have you any tomatas? Fanny and I regale on them every day.

1881: USA

From the fieldwork diary of Alice Cunningham Fletcher, published as *Camping with the Sioux*:

Reached Spotted Tail camp at 3.30. . . . Buffalo-chip went ahead and soon we were driven up to the large tent set aside for guests, owned by Asanpi, the Chief of Ogallala [*sic*] Indians, one of the bands of the group a fine, comely, cordial man. His wife came in and welcomed us and after a little space, we were heralded to his house near by, to supper.

Meanwhile, hay had been spread on the floor for our beds and an extra stretch of ducking to the windward of our tent. The meat was of dried buffalo meat and bread and coffee. The coffee was sweetened before served, this not always done. The host, Asanpi, and his comely wife, sat by the stove and her husband and the scout. On the walls were sheets of newspaper and some pictures cut from the papers.

Our meals served on a piece of canvas spread on the floor between the two beds, our coffee in tin dishes. We sat on the floor. Our host said, "I am afraid you will find it hard to eat without knives and forks". Buffalo-chip's wife said, she would get ours and that quite relieved Asanpi. So we ate his viands with our own knives and forks. Ga-ha, Buffalo-chip's wife, saw that I was making but little headway with the pile of meat on my plate and she, without attracting any one's notice, sent word round to me that she would take what I could not eat. Could any one be more thoughtful and courteous?

What we did not eat Ga-ha took away with her. When the dishes are emptied they are piled up and placed at the edge of the cloth. Our host ate sitting beside his wife.

Later, we were called to supper at Asanpi's son's. Here again we found buffalo meat and bread. The log house was neatly furnished inside—a clock on the wall and again some newspaper prints for decoration, several bits of bead work hung up and the packs made of buffalo hide.

The stove was clean, and again we sat on the floor. Beside the stove was the young mother and little girl, a year and a half old, playing in her lap, or running or hanging about her father. It had earrings, necklaces and the brass bangles on her wrists. Its mother was plump and comely. She was dressed in the same way.

The little boy had his side braids bound in strips of beaver skin and his scalp lock braided and the end fastened with a tassel of beads. When we reached the son's house, the father was there to welcome us. He talked to us through a half-breed interpreter.

We had had four invitations to supper. Buffalo-chip, his wife and Wajapa went to three places and excused us. A plate of pounded buffalo meat mixed with choke cherries was sent to me. Woman's work, I shall take it home.

1918: France

Future president Harry Truman was on active military duty in France, and while he was away he wrote regularly to his sweetheart and future wife, Bess Wallace. His letter on this day was from "somewhere in France."

I wish I could have gone to Lone Jack with you on your hunt for a chicken dinner. I'd have taken you back through Lee's Summit and about eight miles west, where I know there are chickens—and a good old mother who can cook them—and we'd have had a real chicken dinner without any expense whatever, although from what Mary tells me it is necessary for each one to carry his own sugar. When we go anywhere to dine out over here we carry both bread and sugar. Sometimes we forget it and then it is necessary to use all our arts and wiles to persuade the proprietor of the place to let us have some. If it happens that the proprietor is feminine, there is normally a chance of success by an added compensation of some francs.

OCTOBER 12

OKTOBERFEST

1810: Munich, Germany

The marriage of Crown Prince Ludwig of Bavaria (later Ludwig I) and Theresa of Saxe-Hildburghausen took place on this day. Ludwig wanted his subjects to enjoy the festivities, and some great events were scheduled for the general populace. These public celebrations were so successful it was decided to make it an annual event. It is called the Oktoberfest, and is celebrated around the world wherever there are German communities.

KOSHER ABOARD THE R.M.S QUEEN MARY

1949: At Sea

The Cunard Line R.M.S *Queen Mary* offered the following kosher luncheon menu for its Jewish passengers on this day:

Grape Fruit Juice

Hors d'Oeuvres Varieés

Boiled Haddock

Lentil Soup

Grilled Beefsteak and Onions

Cauliflower Sauté Potatoes

COLD: Roast Lamb Salami Sausage

Salads: Lettuce Tomato Onion

French Dressing

Compote of Plums

Cake: Plain and Fruit

Matzos Rye Bread

Lemon Tea Black Coffee

A TURTLE FOR THE ROYAL SOCIETY

1750: England

The Royal Society had a resolution in place for decades to the effect that

[a]ny Nobleman or Gentleman complimenting this company annually with venison, not less than a Haunch, shall, during the continuance of such an annuity, be deemed an Honorary Member and admitted as often as he comes, without paying the fine which those members do who are elected by Ballot.

This practice does not appear to have been universally admired, especially when, as time went on, the presentation of other dainties besides venison was regarded as a qualification for Honorary Membership. On October 4, 1750, one Andrew Mitchell (“a visitor then present”) promised to provide a turtle which “he expects very soon from the West Indies.” Unfortunately, on October 12, the day that Mr. Mitchell’s turtle was expected, it happened to die “as the ship came up the Channel.” The records rather drily indicate that “the bill of fare wherewith he comforted the spirits of the bon vivants” was satisfactory.

Turkey boiled and oysters.

2 dishes Herring

Calves head, hashed.

Tongue and Udder.

Fowles and bacon.

Leg of Pork and Pease.

Chine of mutton.

S^r Loin of Beef.

Apple Pye.

Plumb Pudding.

Butter and Cheese.

THE IRISH FAMINE

1846: Ireland

The devastating potato famine was causing starvation on a massive scale. The constabulary in Roscommon reported on this day that there were 7,500 people existing on boiled cabbage leaves once in forty-eight hours.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1852: Britain

Charles Scott Jackson of Cannon Street, City, was granted a patent for “a method of preserving seeds, potatoes, and other roots, from mildew, rot, fungus, and worms, by subjecting them to, or applying to their surfaces, salts of zinc, principally the sulphate of zinc. To prepare potatoes for seed they are first washed clean, cut in the usual manner, and steeped in a solution of the sulphate of zinc from eight to twelve hours.

DISH OF THE DAY

1838: France

Chicken Breast à la Berlioz was served for the first time on this day. It was dedicated to the composer Berlioz, by Casimir Moisson, chef at the *Cafe de Paris*, and was served to Berlioz, Honore de Balzac, the Goncourt brothers, and several other friends to celebrate the Paris opening of Berlioz’s opera, *Benvenuto Cellini*.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1805: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day Patrick Gass wrote:

Most of our people having been accustomed to meat, do not relish the fish, but prefer dog meat, which, when well cooked, tastes very well. The country on both sides is high dry prairie plains without a stick of timber. There is no wood of any kind to be seen except a few small willows along the shore; so that it is with difficulty we can get enough to cook with.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1763: France

From the journal of Tobias Smollett's *Travels through France and Italy*:

All manner of butcher's meat and poultry are extremely good in this place. The beef is excellent. The wine, which is generally drunk, is a very thin kind of Burgundy. I can by no means relish their cookery; but one breakfasts deliciously upon their petit pains and their pales of butter, which last is exquisite. The common people, and even the bourgeois of Paris live, at this season, chiefly on bread and grapes, which is undoubtedly very wholesome fare. If the same simplicity of diet prevailed in England, we should certainly undersell the French at all foreign markets for they are very slothful with all their vivacity and the great number of their holidays not only encourages this lazy disposition, but actually robs them of one half of what their labour would otherwise produce.

1770: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde. He entertained friends at dinner on this day.

I gave them for dinner a dish of fine Tench which I caught out of my brother's Pond in Pond Close this morning, Ham, and 3 Fowls boiled, a Plumb Pudding; a couple of Ducks roasted, a roasted neck of Pork, a Plumb Tart and an Apple Tart, Pears, Apples and Nuts after dinner; White Wine and red, Beer and Cyder. Coffee and Tea in the evening at six o'clock. Hashed Fowl and Duck and Eggs and Potatoes *etc.* for supper. We did not dine till four o'clock—nor supped till ten . . . the company did not go away till near twelve o'clock. . . . The dinner and supper were extremely well done and well set of.

1773: Scotland

From James Boswell's *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson*:

After breakfast, we made a second attempt to get to the harbour; but another

storm soon convinced us that it would be in vain . . . we resolved to go to Mr. McSweyn's, where we arrived very wet, fatigued and hungry. In this situation we were somewhat disconcerted by being told that we should have no dinner till late in the evening : but should have tea in the mean time. Dr. Johnson opposed this arrangement; but they persisted, and he took the tea very readily. He said to me afterwards, 'You must consider, sir, a dinner here is a matter of great consequence. It is a thing first to be planned, and then executed. I suppose the mutton was bought some miles off, from some place where they knew there was a sheep killed.

OCTOBER 13

FAMINE IN CAMBODIA

1979: Cambodia

After the fall of the ruling Communist government of the Khmer Rouge, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) launched the Joint Mission—a massive aid program—in Cambodia. The country had suffered ten years of internal conflict, war, and genocide, and thousands were starving. The appeal for \$110 million represented triple the ICRC's annual budget for its worldwide relief efforts of the previous year. By the end of the project, in December 1980, 250,000 metric tons of food had been delivered. In addition, 40,000 tons of rice and vegetable seed were provided to allow farmers to start local production up again.

The first ICRC delegate to be admitted to Cambodia was François Bugnion, who later said:

When we first went there we were horrified to see children starving, many of them unable to stand up . . . we began food deliveries there and after a few weeks went back and found the girls having dancing lessons, girls seven to eight years old, learning those beautiful, graceful movements of the traditional Khmer dances.

FOOD & WAR

1870: Paris

From the *Diary of the Besieged Resident in Paris*, by Henry Labouchere. The writer describes a visit on this day to the Faubourg St. Germain:

In this solemn abode of a fossil aristocracy I have a relative, a countess. She is, I believe, my cousin about sixteen times removed; but as she is the only person of rank with whom my family can claim the most distant relationship, we stick to the. . . . “It is a grand sight,” observed one old gentleman, as he put a third lump of sugar in his tea and another into his pocket, “a glorious spectacle, to see a population that was supposed to be given up to luxury, subsisting cheerfully, week after week, upon the simplest necessaries of existence.”

1991: Yugoslavia, Civil War

Twelve thousand citizens were caught in an eighty-seven-day siege of the town of Vukovar by the Yugoslav People’s Army (JNA). A European Community (EC) convoy of fifty trucks laden with food and medicines reached the town on this day, but was initially denied entry, due to disagreements between various stakeholders in the conflict, and their refusal to defuse minefields en route to the city center.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1663: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

My Lady Castlemaine, I hear, is in as great favour as ever, and the King supped with her the very first night he come from Bath: and last night and the night before supped with her; when there being a chine of beef to roast, and the tide rising into their kitchen that it could not be roasted there, and the cook telling her of it, she answered “Zounds! she must set the house on fire but it should be roasted!” So it was carried to Mrs. Sarah’s husband’s, and there it was roasted.

1768: Russia

From *An Account of the Inoculation of Catharine the Second, Empress of all the*

Russias by the English physician Thomas Dimsdale. The empress had been inoculated October 12.

On Monday morning the 13th of October, the Empress went to Czarscoe Selo, one of her country palaces, whither I repaired the same day by her order; her dinner consisted this day of some weak soup, boiled chicken and vegetable. After dinner her Majesty slept near an hour, and found herself greatly refreshed. (See **October 14th**)

1773: Scotland

From James Boswell's *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson*:

[I]t was dangerous to be at sea, at night, in such a vessel, and such weather, we should not sail till the morning tide, when the wind would probably be more gentle. . . . I eat some dry oatmeal, of which I found a barrel in the cabin. I had not done this since I was a boy. Dr. Johnson owned that he too was fond of it when a boy; a circumstance which I was highly pleased to hear from him, as it gave me an opportunity of observing that notwithstanding his joke on the article of OATS, he was himself a proof that this kind of *food* was not peculiar to the people of Scotland.

Johnson's "joke" about oats was his definition of them in his famous dictionary: "Oats: A grain, which in England is generally given to horses, but in Scotland appears to support the people."

1820: At Sea

From *The Journal of Mr William Hamilton Surgeon & Superintendent for the Ship "Maria" on its second passage from England to Van Dieman's Land as a Convict transport between 16th June 1820 and 6th December 1820*:

Weather fine. Bedding up. Prison decks cleaned & inspected. Convicts on deck by Divisions. Corrected a mistake that took place in the issuing of vinegar [as an anti-scorbutic]. It had been issued to the Messes once a week, and this having led to its frequent loss by its being spilt, and the bottles breaking, I desired that it might be issued twice a week which was mistaken for an order to give them double the quantity, and has led to a considerable additional expenditure of that article. But it has been attended

with a good effort in as far as the Convicts have not felt the want of water so much during the late hot weather, and they entreat much that it may be continued. But I do not feel myself justified in continuing it.

1881: USA

From the fieldwork diary of Alice Cunningham Fletcher, published as *Camping with the Sioux*:

We breakfasted at the daughter's who is married to a half-breed and lives white fashion. Buffalo meat, coffee, bread and molasses. I ate the latter. . . . We dined at "Cooks"—a white dinner, good bread, tomatoes, pie, coffee. I ate no buffalo meat.

OCTOBER 14

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1924: USA

Clarence Birdseye received Patent No. 707,407 for a "Method of Preserving Piscatorial Products." His method was to freeze the fish "in suitably formed masses or blocks, which will be free from the air-pockets above referred to, and which can be wrapped by automatic machinery, and therefore so packed for shipment that the undesirable air-filled spaces between the adjacent packages will continue to be eliminated."

PASTA

1602: Rome

A proclamation against the powerful *Confraternita dei Vermicellari* (the guild of pasta-makers) was issued. The order listed the specific types of pasta which could be made (such as lasagne, yellow vermicelli, vermicelli, tagliolini, and white maccheroni) and the maximum sale price allowed for each. Those who breached the legislation could be fined twenty-five scudi and the physical punishment of three "stretches."

The number of regulations in respect of pasta-making from the fourteenth century onward are indicative of its importance in everyday life at the time.

FOOD FOR THE POOR

1835: England

An inspector visited the workhouse in Thorne, in the county of Yorkshire on this day. His report included a summary of the diet for the thirty-one inmates (thirteen men, seven women, and eleven children.)

- **Dinner:**
- Sunday: Boiled Meat Broth and Potatoes
- Monday: Cold Meat and Broth
- Tuesday: Potato and Meat Pie
- Wednesday: Light Dumplings and Sweet Sauce
- Thursday: Meat and Broth same as Sunday
- Friday: Potato and Meat Pie
- Saturday: Meat and Broth and Potatoes
- **Breakfast:** Women, Tea; Men, Boiled Milk and Bread.
- **Supper:** Women, Tea; Men, Cold milk and Bread.

Other comments were that baking was done once a week, there was “[n]o stint in Bread”; from 35 to 40 lbs. of beef were bought weekly, 140 stone bacon consumed annually, and the allowance of tea was 3 oz. weekly “besides Tea Leaves” (which presumably means the old leaves reused).

ANNIVERSARY

1644: London, England

This was the birthday of William Penn, the founder of Pennsylvania. He was a prolific writer on matters of Quaker doctrine, and his book *Some Fruits of Solitude* contained many aphorisms on food and eating:

Have wholesome, but not costly Food, and be rather cleanly than dainty in ordering it.

The Receipts of Cookery are swell'd to a Volume, but a good Stomach excels them all; to which nothing contributes more than Industry and Temperance.

It is a cruel Folly to offer up to Ostentation so many Lives of Creatures, as make up the State of our Treats; as it is a prodigal one to spend more in Sawce than in Meat.

If thou rise with an Appetite, thou art sure never to sit down without one.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1805: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day William Clark wrote of the loss of provisions when a canoe overturned:

[F]or the first time for three weeks past I had a good dinner of Blue wing Teel, . . . our loss in provisions is verry considerable all our roots was in the canoe that Sunk, and Cannot be dried Sufficent to save, our loose powder was also in the Canoe and is all wete. . . . we have made it a point at all times not to take any thing belonging to the Indians even their wood. But at this time we are Compelled to violate that rule and take a part of the split timber we find here bur[e]d for fire wood, as no other is to be found in any direction.

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

The red wallabi (*Halmaturus agilis*, Gould) was very numerous along the gullies of the river: and we started a flock of red foresters (*Osphranter Antilopinus*, Gould) out of a patch of scrub on the brow of a stony hill. Charley and Brown, accompanied by Spring [one of the dogs], pursued them, and killed a fine young male. I had promised my companions that, whenever a kangaroo was caught again, it should be roasted whole, whatever its size might be. We had consequently a roasted Red Forester for supper, and we never rolled ourselves up in our blankets more satisfied with a repast.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1768: Russia

From *An Account of the Inoculation of Catharine the Second, Empress of all the Russias*, by the English physician Thomas Dimsdale. The empress had been inoculated against smallpox on October 12.

Tuesday, October the 14th, she passed a tolerable night; certain signs of infection appeared on the places of incision: a little pain was felt under the arm, opposite to the inoculated part; dinner consisted of soup made without meat . . . Supper was water gruel. (See **October 13**)

1795: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde:

Dinner to day, rost Beef & a Damson Pudding. Sam. Pounsett told us three very remarkable facts this Evening of some wonderful Men. The first was, that he saw a Man who was a Soldier eat a hind-Quarter of Veal that weighed eighteen Pounds, a sixpenny Loaf of Bread, and drank three Quarts of Beer, at one Meal, for a Wager. The Second was that there were two Men, that eat a Leg of Beef, bone and all, one eat the Meat and the other the bone. The other was, of a Man drinking half Pint Tumbler Glass of Beer and eat the Glass after it.

1818: At Sea

John Keats wrote to his brother George on this day.

JOHN KEATS wrote to his brother George on this day:

I came by ship from Inverness and was nine days at sea. . . . I was the only Englishman on board. There was a downright Scotchman who hearing that there had been a bad crop of Potatoes in England had brought some triumphant Specimens from Scotland—these he exhibited with national pride. . . . I fed upon beef all the way; not being able to eat the thick porridge which the Ladies managed to manage with large awkward horn spoons into the bargain.

OCTOBER 15

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1895: USA

Henry D. Perky, of Denver, Colorado, was granted Patent No. 548,086 for “Bread and Method of Preparing Same.” Perky was a pioneer of the concept of “cookless breakfast food” and he was the first to produce ready-to-eat cereal on a commercial scale. He founded the Cereal Machine Company to make Shredded Wheat (*see* **September 17**)—which this patent clearly describes. Perky summarized his application with the words:

What I claim, and desire to secure by Letters Patent, is—

1. A food or bread composed of superposed or massed layers or deposits of dry, externally rough, porous, sinuous threads or filaments of cooked whole wheat containing intermixed the bran, starch, and gluten of the entire berry, and which is absolutely free from leavening or raising material, or their products.
2. The process of reducing cereals for food, consisting, first, in cooking the grain with salt, after it has been thoroughly cleaned, without destroying the whole berry form, second, partially drying the grain with constant agitation until its interior and exterior portions are of substantially the same consistency, and finally, compressing the grain to intimately commingle the outer or bran coats, gluten layers, and starchy, interior portions in the form of porous, rough filaments or threads, substantially as described.

FOOD & THE LAW

1336: England

The first known sumptuary law in England was enacted on this day, in the tenth year of the reign of Edward III. It was the *Statutum de Cibariis Utendis* (the Statute for the Regulation of Provisions).

[The king and Parliament] hath ordained that no man, of what state or condition soever he be, shall serve [or cause himself to be served with] in his house or anywhere else, at dinner-meal, or supper or at any other time more than two courses, and each mess of two sorts of victuals at the utmost, be it of flesh or fish, with the common sorts of pottages without sauce or any other sort of victuals. And if any man choose to have sauce for his mess he may have it, provided it he not made at great cost: and if flesh or fish are to be mixed therein, it shall be of two sorts only at the utmost, either flesh or fish, and shall stand instead of a mess, except only on the principal feasts of the year, that is to say, the eve and day of Christmas, St. Stephen, Easter, *etc.* on which feasts and days every man may he served with three courses at the utmost, after the manner aforesaid.

The statute was to go into effect on the first Monday after the next All Saints Day, and should be “cried in each county” and kept “in the form, and manner below stated without any additions or interpretations of it.”

1836: London, England

The periodical magazine *Figaro* published on this day commented on the new Poor Law Bill:

The New Poor Law

This grand starvation scheme continues to increase the number of pauper funerals and deaths in the workhouse. This is certainly one way of reducing the poor rates, about as humane as it would be to reduce the civil list, by cutting the throats of all the pensioners. Poor-rates were an evil, and so is the pension-list; but murder either by starvation or the knife, is not exactly the remedy to apply in either case. At all events, in a civilised country, one

is rather startled by the policy which prescribes *slow and deliberate* murder of the poor as a grand remedy for the expense of supporting them. Such is, in fact, the new Poor Law Bill.

OFFICIAL DINNERS

1836: London, England

The same edition of the periodical magazine *Figaro*, which gave the comments on the Poor Law given above, also made this satirical jibe against political dinners:

Official Dinner Parties

We now and then hear of official dinner parties, though we must say, we have not yet learned how one dinner party can be more *official* than another dinner party. We know that the Ministers give a dinner annually at Blackwall, consisting of *white bait*, which we *do* comprehend, because the *bait* is meant to be taken by their underlings, to hook them in to support them, and being *of all fish*, it is fairly entitled to the epithet *offish-all(official)*. But other dinner parties being official, we repeat we don't quite comprehend. How can our tureen of soup be more official than another tureen of soup, or one haunch of mutton be more ministerial than another haunch of mutton. We can certainly understand that the *loaves and the fishes* may be all official, but a complete *official dinner* is past our philosophy. *Official deserts* are far more intelligible to us, and we flatter ourselves that we give a great deal of that sort of thing served up in the *plates* of this most popular of all periodicals.

FOOD & WAR

1863: USA, Civil War

Captain Hyndman of the 4th Pa. Cavalry was captured in October 1863 and taken to a Rebel prison. He described the rations in his memoir:

We arrived at Richmond on the 15th, and were confined in Libby Prison. The bill of fare consisted of half a pound of cornbread a day to each man, and very seldom any meat. Obligated to carry our own rations (such as we

and very seldom any meat. Obedient to carry our own rations (such as we received) every day to the prison, we got a breath of fresh air. A detail of 40 or so were made from among the prisoners each day, who, with pieces of old blankets, proceeded under a rebel escort to the bakehouse; the rations were thrown into these and carried to the prison.

. . . The dead-house was adjacent to the commissary department; thus we passed the ghastly charnel-house of the dead comrades every day, and glanced at it with heavy hearts. We felt that our own emaciated bodies would soon be numbered among its corpses.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1856: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau:

An abundance of checkerberries by the hemlock at V. Muhlenbergii Brook. A remarkable year for berries. Even this, too, is abundant like the rest. They are tender and more palatable than ever now. I find a little pile of them, maybe fifteen or twenty, on the moss with each a little indentation or two on it, made apparently by some bird or beast.

OCTOBER 16

GLOBAL FOOD

1979

World Food Day was proclaimed in 1979 by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) to celebrate the founding of the organisation in 1945, and is celebrated around the world on October 16. Since 1981, a theme has been chosen for the day: some of these have been:

1981: Food Comes First

1984: Women in Agriculture

1990: Food and the Future

1991: Trees for Life

2000: A Millennium Free from Hunger

2004: Biodiversity for Food Security

2013: Sustainable Food Systems for Food Security and Nutrition

1985

World Anti-McDonald's Day was launched by the London Greenpeace organization to coincide with World Food Day. Individuals and groups organized protests against what they see as the broader implications of the "junk food" industry: the unethical targeting of children, the exploitation of workers (especially young workers who staff the counters of the fast food outlets), environmental damage resulting from production and packaging methods, and the cultural impact accruing from the global domination of huge corporations over various aspects of day-to-day life.

In 1999 there were protests in 345 towns in 23 countries, and the number appears to grow every year. One of the consequences of the growing protests was the "McLibel case" (see **June 19**).

PASTA

1699: Naples

The Statuto dell'Arte de Vermicellari (a statute of the pasta-makers' guild) established a chapel in the church of the *Carminè Maggiore* as the headquarters of the guild.

THE LONDON BEER FLOOD

1814: London, England

A huge vat of porter burst open at the Meux and Company Brewery in Tottenham Court Road on this day. The explosion of the vat triggered a cascade of explosions in other tanks, and the final result was the outpouring of over

of explosions in boiler tanks, and the final result was the outpouring of over 323,000 imperial gallons of beer onto the streets, serious damage to the brewery building and an adjacent tavern, the destruction of a swathe of tenements in the immediate area, and eight confirmed deaths.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1805: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day John Ordway wrote: “[T]he Country around these forks is level Smooth plain. No timber. Not a tree to be seen as far as our Eyes could extend . . . they [local Indian tribe] Sold us eight fat dogs and Some fresh sammon.”

FOOD & WAR

1914: World War I, Commission for Relief in Belgium

A flurry of correspondence took place on this day in relation to the setting up of the Commission for Relief in Belgium. The U.S. ambassador to Belgium, Brad Whitlock, sent a telegram to U.S. secretary of state William Jennings Bryan to explain the urgent situation in Belgium, and requesting official approval to set up the commission.

But now a grave situation confronts the land. In normal times Belgium produces only one-sixth of the foodstuffs she consumes. Within two weeks there will be no more food in Belgium. Winter is coming on and there are thousands who are without home and without hope; therefore it is necessary to extend this relief work to the whole of Belgium. . . . Our hope is that the Belgian Minister can arrange, and if there be no impropriety in their doing, that the American and Spanish Ambassadors may assist him in arranging for the provisions which the Committee is ready to buy. . . . I trust the Department will approve this course. . . . It is not money but food that is needed.

Whitlock also sent a telegram on the same day, to the president:

In two weeks the civil population of Belgium, already in misery, will face

starvation. In view of this fact, and at the request of the Relief Committee, I venture to call your attention to my telegram to the Department dated 16 October in the conviction that your great heart will find some way by which America may help to provide food for these hungry ones in the dark days of the terrible winter that is coming on.

Also on the same day a *Note Verbale* was sent from the German Foreign Office to the U.S. ambassador in Berlin, stating the German government's approval of Belgian relief: "In reply to your verbal note of the ninth of October, F.O. No. 759, the Foreign Office has the honor to inform you that the furnishing of foodstuffs for the poor of Belgium has the approval of the German Government."

And another letter was sent by Field Marshall Von Der Goltz, the imperial governor-general to the Comité Central guaranteeing that relief supplies to the Belgian population would not be requisitioned.

In answer to your courteous letter of today I . . . do not hesitate formally and distinctly to give assurances that foodstuffs of all kinds imported by the Committee under Your Excellency's patronage for the provisioning of the civil populace of Belgium shall be kept exclusively for the use of the Belgian populace; that these foodstuffs shall hereafter be exempt from requisition by the military authorities; and, finally, that they shall remain entirely at the disposal of the Committee.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1661: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

This day dined by appointment with me Dr. Tho. Pepys and my Cosen Snow and my brother Tom, upon a Fin of Ling and some Sounds, neither of which did I ever know before, but most excellent meat they are both, that in all my life I never eat the like fish.

Richard Bradley, in *Husbandry and Trade Improved* (1727), describes fish sounds, and mentions their popularity as food in his time:

What we call cods sounds are the swimming bladders join'd to the back

what we call cod-sounds are the swimming bladders joined to the back, and they are thick and glutinous, and are produced beyond the cavity of the abdomen, and exit of the excrements. A great many understanding men prefer this before all other parts of the fish.

Recipes for fish sounds are nonexistent in modern cookery books, but they were still a popular dish in the mid-nineteenth century. Eliza Acton described how to cook them in *Modern Cookery for Private Families* (1845):

To boil Cod's Sounds

Should they be highly salted, soak them for a night, and on the following day rub off entirely the discoloured skin; wash them well, lay them into plenty of cold milk and water, and boil them gently from thirty to forty minutes, or longer should they not be quite tender. Clear off the scum as it rises with great care, or it will sink and adhere to the sounds, of which the appearance will then be spoiled. Drain them well, dish them on a napkin, and send egg sauce and plain melted butter to table with them.

1773: Scotland

From James Boswell's *Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson*:

The captain informed us that he had named his ship the *Bonnetta*, out of gratitude to Providence; for once, when he was sailing to America with a good number of passengers, the ship in which he then sailed was becalmed for five weeks, and during all that time, numbers of the fish Bonnetta swam close to her, and were caught for food; he resolved therefore, that the ship he should next get, should be called the *Bonnetta*.

LAST MEAL

1793: France

Marie Antoinette went to the guillotine on this day. There are various reports of her final meal, but the most authentic voice is presumably that of Rosalie Lamorlière, the young servant who cared for her while she awaited trial in the Conciergerie. According to Rosalie's account, when she offered food to her mistress on the final day, Marie-Antoinette replied, "I need nothing to eat, child

—my life is over.” At Rosalie’s urging, her mistress took a few spoonfuls of broth from a bowl of vermicelli soup before dressing for her execution.

OCTOBER 17

THE BISHOP WHO ATE HIS BOOTS

1909: Canada

Bishop Isaac O. Stringer, an Anglican missionary, spent four years in the Yukon. On one trip home from visiting an isolated village, the party split up, and became lost. Fifty-one days later they walked into an Indian village. In his diary, the bishop noted that by October 17, they were reduced to eating their boots. He described the experience in a letter many years later:

Once upon a time when I was caught in the Rocky Mountains with the coming on of Winter, and with very little food on hand, I nearly starved to death, and in a case like that you will eat anything.

It is well known in the Northland that any skin of an animal that has not been tanned, can be eaten and will sustain life. I and my companion, happened to each have a pair of sealskin boots with walrus skin soles. . . . We boiled and boiled and toasted the pieces of boot, and they were a great aid when we had nothing else—in fact without them we should never have come through. The soles were better than the uppers, and they were thick walrus skin, and could be boiled down to a jelly.

But there is nothing remarkable about eating boots if they are the right kind of boots. People sometimes eat the rind of bacon . . . and if you had a good supply of the skin of bacon, it would keep you alive. . . . Of course the boots I had were not as good as the bacon rind, as they had been used all Summer, and oiled constantly and had become rancid because they were exposed to the sun so much.

We were twenty eight days on very short rations, and we lost fifty pounds each in weight. During the last week or so there was not very much boot left to eat. We got a few frozen berries by scraping away the snow. . . . But there, that is enough about boots.

HUNGER STRIKE

1920: Ireland

Michael Fitzgerald of the Irish Republican Army died in Cork Jail after a sixty-seven-day hunger strike. Two of his comrades, Joe Murphy and Terence McSwiney also died during the same strike.

Refusing to eat to the point of risking life is one of the few ways in which prisoners (especially political prisoners) can draw attention to their cause. The method was famously used by Mahatma Gandhi to draw attention to the move to throw off the British imperial shackles and make India independent in the 1930s and 1940s. Hunger-striking was also used by female suffragists in Britain and America in the early twentieth century, and the brutal force-feeding that they were subjected too was particularly abhorrent to the community.

WINE HISTORY

2001: England, Sotheby's Sale of Finest and Rarest Wines

A single bottle of sherry from the Ukraine, a Massandra Sherry *de la Frontera* 177, was sold for a record price of £31,900 at a wine sale that made almost a million pounds. It is one of the few surviving bottles of this vintage from this famous wine-growing area.

FOOD & WAR

1939: Germany, World War II

The *Scotsman* newspaper reported on the menu advice being given over the radio to German housewives, at the end of the first month of World War II. The following menu is recommended to the German housewife on the German radio for the next three days (says Reuter):

- Tuesday: Breakfast—soup made of rye flour, bread. Lunch—spinach soup, pumpkin, potatoes, and bacon. Supper—vegetable noodles and tea made from blackberries.

- Wednesday: Breakfast—Coffee with milk, bread, and jam. Lunch—Goulash made with venison, potato balls. Supper—Vegetable and bread soup and flummery and berries.
- Thursday: Breakfast—Flour soup and bread. Lunch—Vegetable soup, yeast puff pastry, and stewed fruit. Supper, Bread, with various spreadings such as remainders of venison, goulash, and synthetic butter mixed with herbs.

1941: Britain, World War II

Parliament passed the Potatoes (1941 Crop) Charges Order, made under the Emergency Powers (Defence) Act of 1939. The parliamentary secretary to the Ministry of Food, Major Lloyd George, in supporting its passage said:

This is an Order continuing in a modified form a levy which was imposed in 1940. The original purpose was to contribute a sort of insurance fund, first of all to meet the cost of the scheme of potato control and to create a fund to ensure growers a reasonable return on the surplus potatoes which were there from time to time. . . . The consumer subsidy keeps the price of potatoes down and ensures the grower an adequate price.

The act was revised and enacted every year until 1946.

PASTA

1371: Palermo, Sicily

Regulations fixing the price of various forms of pasta were issued on this day. “Dry” pasta (*pasta axutta*) and fresh or “wet” pasta (*pasta bagnata*) were differentiated, as were pastas made from hard and soft wheat. Pasta was triple the cost of bread: semolina (soft wheat) white macaroni and lasagna were priced at 30 coins per roll, and flour maccarine and lasagna at 20 coins per roll.

SOYER’S CULINARY CAMPAIGN

1857: Crimean Peninsula

After Alexis Soyer returned from the Crimea, he published a book inspired by his experiences called *Soyer's Culinary Campaign, Being Historical Reminiscences of the Late War. With the Plain Art of Cookery for Military and Civil Institutions, the Army, Navy, Public, &c, &c.* Soyer was well and truly a celebrity already, and the book was received with great interest. The reviewer for the *Times* on October 17, 1857, began his report with the following words:

By the efforts of “our own correspondents”, by Parliamentary papers and proceedings, by military memoirs and personal narratives without number, the world has obtained some general information as to the subordinate incidents of the Crimean war. It remained, however, for an artist equally great in war or peace to show us how entirely we must ascribe to himself the fortune of some of our greatest operations. “Valour” says Falstaff “comes of sherries;” but M. Soyer proves, without asserting it, that it has a more necessary connexion with the quality of a man’s soup. Alexis the Savoury opens his box of condiments, and shows us indisputably how fields are won. Such and such proportions of pepper and salt went to make such a breach or to repulse such a night attack. The cruet stand eventually conquered, and is now decorated with stoppers of merit. In the trophy which M Soyer erects upon his covers his frying pans flank the helmet, his spit crosses the musket, his ladles and gridiron combine with sword and breastplate; while the reverse shows his field stove emitting a steamy glory, through which an English cannon watches grimly over a plum pudding and the laurels which are sprouting to crown its victorious author.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1492: Bahamas

Christopher Columbus was on his first voyage, and on this date was in the area now called the Bahamas. According to the interpretation of Columbus’s journal given by Las Casas in *Historia de las Indias*, the famous explorer first encountered maize on this day; he refers to it as *panizo*—which is often translated as millet. “It is a very green and flat and extremely fertile island, and I have no doubt that they sow and harvest millets all year long, and similarly other crops.”

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1661: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys. He was annoyed to be served a fraudulent venison pasty on this day.

At the office all the morning, at noon my wife being gone to my coz Snow's with Dr. Thomas Pepys and my brother Tom to a venison pasty (which proved a pasty of salted pork); by appointment I went with Captain David Lambert to the Exchequer, and from thence by appointment he and I were to meet at a cook's shop to dine. . . . Thence to the Cook's and there dined with Captain Lambert and his father-in-law, and had much talk of Portugall; from whence he is lately come, and he tells me it is a very poor dirty place; I mean the City and Court of Lisbon; that the King is a very rude and simple fellow. . . . That the King has his meat sent up by a dozen of lazy guards and in pipkins, sometimes, to his own table; and sometimes nothing but fruits, and, now and then, half a hen. And now that the Infanta is become our Queen, she is come to have a whole hen or goose to her table, which is not ordinary.

1667: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

[A]nd at noon home to dinner, where Mr. John Andrews and his wife came to dine with me, and pretty merry we were; only, I out of humour the greatest part of the dinner, by reason that my people had forgot to get wine ready (I having none in my house, which I cannot say now these almost three years I think, without having two or three sorts), by which we were fain to stay a good while while some could be fetched. When it came, I begun to be merry, and merry we were; but it was an odd, strange thing to observe of Mr. Andrews what a fancy he hath to raw meat, that he eats it with no pleasure unless the blood run about his chops; which it did now, by a leg of mutton that was not above half-boiled; but it seems, at home all his meat is dressed so, and beef and all, and eats it so at night also.

1788: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde: "Mr. Jeanes sent me this morning a large Hamper full of common Apples. I sent the same Hamper back full of my

large hamper full of common Apples. I sent the same hamper back full of my Apples called Beefans with a great many Shrubs, Laurels &c.”

Woodforde’s “Beefans” were Norfolk Beefings (or sometimes Biffins), a local cultivar very popular at the time as an apple suitable for all purposes—eating, cooking, storing, and drying. The word *biffins* without the adjective also referred to the slowly baked apple partly dried and flattened under weights, to be peeled and cored and eaten with cream as a dessert when desired.

1802: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde. The last entry in his diary is most fitting for the man, who was clearly interested in his food, as he does not fail to mention his dinner. He died on New Year’s Day 1803. “Sunday: Very weak this Morning, scarce able to put on my Cloaths and with great difficult, get down Stairs with help. . . . Dinner today, Rost Beef&c.”

HOSPITAL FOOD

1747: London

A resolution was made by the Committee of the Foundling Hospital “[t]hat on the 17th of October yearly the Children in this Hospital have a Holiday and Roast Beef and Plumb-Pudding for Dinner being the Date of the Charter.” See **November 17** for the general diet.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1805: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day William Clark wrote:

[W]e purchased all the dogs we could, the fish being out of season and dieing in great numbers in the river, we did not think proper to use them, The number of dead Salmon on the Shores & floating in the river is incredible to say. . . . Those people appears to live in a State of comparitive happiness. . . . Some have their teeth worn to the gums, narticularlly those of the upper jaw, and the tribes generally have had had

particularly] those of the upper jaw, and the tribes generally have had bad teeth the cause of it I cannot account [for], and attachd. to the roots & the method they have of using the dried Salmon, which is nearly worming it and eating the rine & scales with the flesh of the fish, no doubt contributes to it.

OCTOBER 18

SOUR CAKES DAY

Saint Luke's Day

In Rutherglen, Scotland, this was known as “Sour Cakes Day,” although it is no longer known how or why Saint Luke’s Eve and Day became associated with these cakes. Reports differ as to whether the celebrations began on the eve, or on the day itself, but its roots are certainly in pagan rites of propitiation. One writer in 1856 gave the following description of the tradition:

Another ancient custom, the baking of sour cakes on St. Luke’s eve, is peculiar to the burgh, and is supposed to have had an origin anterior to Christianity itself. We have ourselves witnessed this curious operation in the Thistle Inn of Rutherglen—within the past two or three years. This mystic baking requires for its proper execution the services of some six or eight elderly ladies. These, with each a small bake-board on her knee, are seated in a semicircle on the floor of the apartment devoted to the purpose, and pass the cakes, which are formed of a kind of fermented dough, in succession from one to the other, until the requisite degree of tenuity is attained, when they are dexterously transferred to an individual called the queen, who, with certain ceremonies, performs the operation of toasting. These cakes, which we have often tasted, are generally given to strangers visiting St. Luke’s fair: They are somewhat like a wafer in thickness, of an agreeable acidulous taste, and lend an additional relish to the drams usually in extra demand at such times. The lover of old customs would regret the discontinuance of this curious ceremony, the observance of which forms an interesting link between the present age and an impenetrable antiquity.

A CORONATION DINNER

1851: Prussia

The menu at the banquet following the coronation of King William of Prussia was:

Potage d'orge a la Princesse Consomme Printanier Royal

Saumon du Rhin a la Genoise Turbot sauce aux huitres

Piece de boeuf a la Flamande

Jambon glace au madere

Poulardes a la Toulouse

Homards a la Bagration

Pates de Foie Gras a la Gelee

Faisans de Boheme

Punch a la Romaine

Petits Pois a la Francaise Asperges a la Hollandaise

Poches a la Maintenon

Souffle a la vanilla

Gelee a la Sultane s l'ananas

Charlotte a la Parisienne

Glaces varies

Dessert

FOOD SAFETY

1969: USA

The FDA removed the GRAS (“Generally Recognized as Safe”) status and banned the use of the artificial sweeteners known as cyclamates because of evidence they increased the risk of bladder cancer in laboratory rats. In the study quoted, the cyclamates had been used in a combination with saccharin.

A National Academy of Sciences panel in 1985 which looked at the evidence available at that time expressed the opinions that the chemical did not appear to cause cancer by itself, although if used in combination with other known carcinogens, it may trigger the cancer earlier, or increase the number of tumors which developed.

The jury is still out on the potential for harm to humans in using cyclamates, and they are still in use in over fifty countries around the world.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1921: USA

Charles Strite of Minneapolis, Minnesota, was granted Patent No. 1,394,450 for an automatic pop-up toaster. Strite’s patent application summarized the aims of his invention:

An object is to provide an automatic electric bread toaster in which the heating current will be automatically cut off after the bread has been toasted for a predetermined length of time, which may be varied according to the amount of moisture in the bread and the degree of crispness desired for the toast.

Another object is to provide a toaster in which the bread is toasted in a substantially closed casing or oven having windows through which the bread may be observed while it is being toasted.

Another object is to provide a device in which the toast is automatically removed from the oven when the toasting operation is completed.

Another object is to provide a toaster in which a number of slices of bread may be toasted and in which current may be supplied to all of the heating

elements or only a portion of the same, depending upon the number of slices which it is desired to toast at any one time.

Another object is to provide a toaster in which the toasting operation is performed electrically in an economical manner by means which is not liable to get out of order.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1564: England

Captain John Hawkins sailed from Plymouth on his second voyage aboard Queen Elizabeth's ship the *Jesus of Lubek*. His sailing orders from the Queen ended with the famous advice: "Serve God daily, love one another, preserve your victuals, beware of fire, and keepe good companie."

Three other ships accompanied the *Jesus of Lubek*: the *Salomon*, the *Tiger*, and the *Swallow*. They set off "to the coast of Guinea, and the Indies of Nova Hispana," "with ordinance and victual requisite for such a voyage."

1844: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

We have regularly balanced our loads, and made up every bag of flour to the weight of 120 pounds: of these we have eight, which are to be carried by four bullocks. The chocolate and the gelatine are very acceptable at present, as so little animal food can be obtained.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1881: USA

From the fieldwork diary of Alice Cunningham Fletcher, published as *Camping with the Sioux*:

Rode over to Standing Elk's camp. . . . Saw rations—One tin cup of green coffee for a family of two and four. Less than 1/2 lb. of sugar. A string of

corn for a family of two and four. Less than 7/16. of sugar. A strip of bacon about an inch to 1 ½ wide and from 18 to 30 inches long, and 5 to 3 inches wide for 11 in family. Bacon thrown into flour bag.

OCTOBER 19

STATE DINNER AT THE PALACE

1999: Britain

Queen Elizabeth and Prince Phillip welcomed the president of the People's Republic of China, Jian Zemin, and Madame Zemin for a four-day state visit. It was the first visit of a Chinese head of state to Britain, and it was reported that the personal luggage delivered to Buckingham Palace, where the president and his wife were to stay, included "boxes of Chinese food."

At the official state banquet at Buckingham Palace later in the day the menu included duck consomme, filet of sole, venison, and ice cream bombe glace.

FOOD & WAR

1775: American Revolutionary War

The members of the committee to confer with General Washington met, and decisions were made as to the number and organization of military men, and as to the rations to be allowed.

1. It was proposed for Consideration what Number each Company and how many Companies each Regiment should contain?

Agreed Unanimously that each Regiment consist of 728 Men (including Officers) that it be divided into Eight Companies, each Company to consist of One Captain, 2 Lieutenants, One Ensign, 4 Sergeants, 4 Corporals, 2 Drums or Fifes, 76 Privates.

2. Of what kind and Quality of Provisions a Ration should consist?

Resolved That it be as follows

- One Pound of Beef or $\frac{3}{4}$ lb Pork or one Pound of Salt Fish
- One Pound of Bread or Flour per Diem.
- Three Pints of Pease or Beans per Week or Vegetables equivalent at 6s. per Bushel for Pease and Beans.
- One Pint of Milk per Man per Day or at the Rate of 1d. per Pint
- One half Pint of Rice or one Pint of Indian Meal per Man per Week
- One Quart of Spruce Beer or Cyder per Man per Day or 9 Gallons of Molasses per Company of 100 Men per Week.
- Three Pounds of Candles to 100 Men per Week for Guards &c.
- Twenty four lb. of soft Soap or 8 lb hard Soap for 100 Men per Week.

1870: The Siege of Paris

From *The Diary of a Beseiged Resident*, by Henry Labouchere:

Each person now receives 100 grammes of meat per diem, the system of distribution being that every one has to wait on an average two hours before he receives his meat at the door of a butcher's shop. I dine habitually at a bouillon; there horse-flesh is eaten in the place of beef, and cat is called rabbit. Both, however, are excellent, and the former is a little sweeter than beef, but in other respects much like it; the latter something between rabbit and squirrel, with a flavour all its own. It is delicious. I recommend those who have cats with philoprogenitive proclivities, instead of drowning the kittens, to eat them. Either smothered in onions or in a ragout they are excellent. When I return to London I shall frequently treat myself to one of these domestic animals, and ever feel grateful to Bismarck for having taught me that cat served up for dinner is the right animal in the right place.

NEW YORK COFFEE

1775: New York

A letter about the dearth of coffee houses written by “A Friend to the City” was published in the *New York Journal* on this day.

To the Inhabitants of New York:

It gives me concern, in this time of public difficulty and danger, to find we have in this city no place of daily general meeting, where we might hear and communicate intelligence from every quarter and freely confer with one another on every matter that concerns us. Such a place of general meeting is of very great advantage in many respects, especially at such a time as this, besides the satisfaction it affords and the sociable disposition it has a tendency to keep up among us, which was never more wanted than at this time. To answer all these and many other good and useful purposes, coffee houses have been universally deemed the most convenient places of resort, because, at a small expense of time or money, persons wanted may be found and spoke with, appointments may be made, current news heard, and whatever it most concerns us to know. In all cities, therefore, and large towns that I have seen in the British dominions, sufficient encouragement has been given to support one or more coffee houses in a genteel manner. How comes it then that New York, the most central, and one of the largest and most prosperous cities in British America, cannot support one coffee house? It is a scandal to the city and its inhabitants to be destitute of such a convenience for want of due encouragement. A coffee house, indeed, there is, a very good and comfortable one, extremely well tended and accommodated, but it is frequented but by an inconsiderable number of people; and I have observed with surprise, that but a small part of those who do frequent it, contribute anything at all to the expense of it, but come in and go out without calling for or paying anything to the house. In all the coffee houses in London, it is customary for every one that comes in to call for at least a dish of coffee, or leave the value of one, which is but reasonable, because when the keepers of these houses have been at the expense of setting them up and providing all necessaries for the accommodation of company, every one that comes to receive the benefit of these conveniences ought to contribute something towards the expense of them.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

1783: Britain

In 1776, the British parliament had authorized the use of hulks (decommissioned ships not deemed sea-worthy) as prisons. The hulks were particularly used to hold convicts awaiting transportation to the colonies. The act was amended from time to time, but remained in effect for eighty years.

As can probably be guessed, conditions aboard the floating prisons were usually very bad indeed. John Howard, the British prison reformer, visited some of the hulks in 1782–1783, and reported on the conditions he found there.

Oct. 19, 1783, there were on board the *Justitia* one hundred and seventy-two, and in the hospital ship twenty-two. The men in the *Justitia* looked well, which I doubt not was in a great measure owing to their being employed, and also restrained from spirituous and other strong liquors. Of late, but few of them have died: this shews that their situation is better with respect to health, but the association of so many criminals is utterly destructive to morals.

A Table of Diet expended by the *Convicts* on board the *Justitia* hulk daily

- Each *mess* is for *six men*, with seven pounds of bread every day.
- Breakfast. Every day; a pint of barley or rice made into three quarts of soup.
- Dinner. Sunday. Six pounds of salt pork or seven pounds of beef, with five quarts of beer.
 - Monday, Wednesday, Friday. Six pounds of bullock's head.
 - Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday. Two pounds of cheese, and five quarts of beer.
- Supper. Sunday, Monday, Wednesday, Friday. A pint of pease and barley made into three quarts of soup.

- Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday. A pint of oatmeal made into burgou.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1805: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day William Clark wrote, “I suped on the crane which I killed to day.” And Joseph Whitehouse wrote, “[T]he Natives came to See us in their canoes. brought us Some fish which had been roasted and pounded up fine and made up in balls, which eat verry well.”

1844: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt’s journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia: “Mr. Roper and Mr. Gilbert had brought one pigeon and one duck, as a day’s sport; which, with the kangaroo, gave us a good and desirable supper of animal food.”

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt’s journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

Charley, Brown, and John, who had been left at the lagoon to shoot waterfowl, returned with twenty ducks for luncheon, and went out again during the afternoon to procure more for dinner and breakfast. They succeeded in shooting thirty-one ducks and two geese; so that we had fifty-one ducks and two geese for the three meals; and they were all eaten, with the exception of a few bony remains, which some of the party carried to the next camp. If we had had a hundred ducks, they would have been eaten quite as readily, if such an extravagant feast had been permitted.

1873: Australia

Peter Egerton-Warburton and his party crossed the continent from the center to the west, via the Great Sandy Desert, in 1872–1873.

This is Sunday. How unlike one at home! Half-a-quart of flour and water, at 4 a.m.; a hard, sinewy bit of raw, that is, sun-dried, but uncooked, camel meat, for dinner at 2 p.m. Supper uncertain, perhaps some roasted acacia seeds; this is our bill of fare. These seeds are not bad, but very small and very hard; they are on bushes, not trees, and the natives use them roasted and pounded.

[The acacia seeds here mentioned are contained in a long pod, something like the shell of the French bean.]

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1554: Italy

From the diary of painter Jacopo Carrucci da Pontormo:

October 19th, felt sick, like having a cold, and after that, could no longer throw up and it took me several nights to get the hard stuff out like it happened to me before in summer, I don't know whether it was the same since the weather has been very nice, and I ate well all the time; so I began to look a little more after myself and toughened myself with 3 of 30 ounces of bread, that is 10 ounces a meal, that is, I ate once a day, without drinking much: before the 16th of the month, I had bottled 6 casks of Chianti.

1709: America

From the diary of William Byrd of Westover, Virginia:

About ten o'clock we went to court where a man was tried for ravishing a very homely woman. There were abundance of women in the gallery. I recommended myself to God before I went into court. About one o'clock I went to my chambers for a little refreshment. The court rose about 4 o'clock and I dined with the Council. I ate boiled beef for dinner. I gave myself the liberty to talk very lewdly, for which God forgive me.

1773: Scotland

From James Boswell's *The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson*:

In the afternoon we went ashore on the coast of Mull, and partook of a cold repast, which we carried with us. We hoped to have procured some rum or brandy for our boatmen and servants, from a publick-house near where we landed; but unfortunately a funeral a few days before had exhausted all their store.

OCTOBER 20

A DIVORCE CLUB DINNER

1930: Reno, Nevada

Reno's "divorce colony" organized a "Ball and Chain Severance Society," which met at a dinner on this night in honor of its president, Abraham Duff ("who expects to receive a divorce tomorrow from Mrs. Fannie Block Duff tomorrow"). Invitations and menus for the dinner read as follows:

Dinner given in honor of Mr Abe Duff, president of the "Ball and Chain Severance Society" of Reno, Nev. Mr Benjamin J. Hanslinger, secretary and chairman of the discouragement committee.

Menu:

- Bullion a la incompatibility
- Salad a la publication of notice
- Entrée: Roast turkey a la temporary alimony
- Shoe lace potatoes a la string 'em along
- Spinach a la grass
- Desserts: Mental cruelty ice cream
- Power of attorney a la Newburg

- Dancing a la St Vitus

Only members of the Washoe County divorce colony admitted.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1770: Indonesia

From the *Endeavour* Journal of Joseph Banks:

“*Batavia Road*”; “*Batavia*”. We concluded that the Hotel would be the best for us, certainly the least troublesome and may be not vastly the most expensive. Accordingly we went there, bespoke beds and slept there at night.

The next Morning we agreed with the keeper of the House whose name was Van Heys the Rates we should pay for living as follows: Each person for Lodging and eating two Rix dollars or 8s pr Diem; for this he agreed as we were five of us who would probably have many visitants from the Ship to keep us a seperate table: for each stranger we were to pay one Rix dollar 4s for dinner, and another for supper and bed if he staid ashore: we were to have also for selves and freinds Tea, Coffee, Punch, and Pipes and tobacco as much as we could destroy, in short every thing the house afforded except wine and beer which we were to pay for at the following rates:

Claret	39 Stivers 3/3
Hock	1 Ryxr 4/
Lisbon	39..... 3/3
Sweet wine	39..... 3/3
Madera	1 Rupee 2/6

Beer 1 Rupee 2/6

Spa Water 1 Ryxr 4/-

Besides this we were to pay for our Servants $\frac{1}{2}$ a rupee $\frac{1}{3}$ a day each.

For these rates, which we soon found to be more than double the common charges of Boarding and lodging in the town, we were furnishd with a Table which under the appearance of Magnificence was wretchedly coverd; indeed Our dinners and suppers consisted of one course each, the one of fifteen the other of thirteen dishes, of which when you came to examine seldom less than 9 or 10 were of Bad Poultry roasted, boild, fryd, stewd &c.&c. and so little concience had they in serving up dishes over and over again that I have seen the same identical roasted Duck appear upon table 3 times as a roasted duck before he found his way into the fricassee, from whence he was again to Pass into forcemeat.

1772: At Sea

Captain James Cook, in the *Resolution*, was sailing in the South Atlantic toward the Cape of Good Hope. Johann Forster, a German naturalist who accompanied Cook reported that by this date

we had now already began to serve to the Ships company the 2d Vat with Sower Kraut, or of pickled & fermented sliced Cabbage. . . . This time we found the people liked it immediately & but few find faults with it, & I must confess being very much used to it in Prussia, Germany & Russia.

1853: USA

Isaac V. Mossman wrote of a journey to Oregon in the mid-nineteenth century.

Our train was known as the Miller's train. We crossed the Missouri River at Council Bluffs on the third day of May, A. D., 1853. We crossed the Cascade Mountains to the old Barlow road. After we had arrived at Foster's. I hid mv friends farewell. and rode on ahead of them into Oregon

City, arriving there on October 20th, and stopping at the Main-Street House. On calling for something to eat, they gave me some poor salmon, weak tea, and “Blue John bread,” which weighed a pound to the square inch. I slept on a wet straw bed, and for breakfast had about the same fare as the night before, and for two meals and the bed I was charged the modest sum of three dollars.

1873: Australia

Peter Egerton-Warburton and his party were the first to cross the continent from the center to the west, via the Great Sandy Desert.

Got a pigeon, and some flour and water for breakfast. We can only allow ourselves a spoonful of flour each at a time, and it won't last many days even at this rate.

Killed a large camel for food at sunset. We would rather have killed a worse one, but this bull had, in the early part of our journey got a very bad back, and was unable to work for a long time. His wound was not quite healed, when we were compelled to load him, in consequence of the loss of our master bull, and so the sore had broken out again, and would have rendered him unfit for work in a day or two; and he might have fallen a prey to the maggots, as a former sore-backed camel did, for they breed in these sores with such wonderful rapidity, and in such prodigious numbers, that they eat the camel up in a short time.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1735: England

John Wesley was about to sail for Georgia (America) on a mission to convert the Indians to Christianity.

Believing the denying ourselves, even in the smallest instances, might, by the blessing of God, be helpful to us, we wholly left off the use of flesh and wine and confined ourselves to vegetables food—chiefly rice and biscuit.

1794: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde:

Busy most part of the Afternoon in making some Mead Wine, to fourteen pound of Honey I put four Gallons of Water, boiled it more than an hour with Ginger and two handfulls of dried Elder-Flowers in it, and skimmed it well. Then I put it in a small Tub to cool, and when almost cold I put in a large gravey-spoonful of fresh Yeast, keeping it in a warm place, the Kitchen during night. Dinner to day, Breast of Veal roasted &c.

1857: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau:

To the Easterbrooks Country.

Apples are gathered; only the ladders here and there, left leaning against the trees.

I had gone but little way on the old Carlisle road when I saw Brooks Clark, who is now about eighty and bent like a bow, hastening along the road, barefooted, as usual, with an axe in his hand; was in haste perhaps on account of the cold wind on his bare feet. It is he who took the *Centinel* so long. When he got up to me, I saw that besides the axe in one hand, he had his shoes in the other, filled with knurly apples and a dead robin. He stopped and talked with me a few moments; said that we had had a noble autumn and might now expect some cold weather. I asked if he had found the robin dead. No, he said, he found it with its wing broken and killed it. He also added that he had found some apples in the woods, and as he hadn't anything to carry them in, he put 'em in his shoes. They were queer-looking trays to carry fruit in. How many he got in along toward the toes, I don't know. I noticed, too, that his pockets were stuffed with them. His old tattered frock coat was hanging in strips about the skirts, as were his pantaloons about his naked feet. He appeared to have been out on a scout this gusty afternoon, to see what he could find, as the youngest boy might. It pleased me to see this cheery old man, with such a feeble hold on life, bent almost double, thus enjoying the evening of his days. Far be it from me to call it avarice or penury, this childlike delight in finding something in the woods or fields and carrying it home in the October evening, as a trophy to be added to his winter's store. Oh, no; he was happy to be Nature's

pensioner still, and bird-like to pick up his living. Better his robin than your turkey, his shoes full of apples than your barrels full; they will be sweeter and suggest a better tale. He can afford to tell how he got them, and we to listen. There is an old wife, too, at home, to share them and hear how they were obtained. Like an old squirrel shuffling to his hole with a nut. Far less pleasing to me the loaded wain, more suggestive of avarice and of spiritual penury.

1881: USA

From the fieldwork diary of Alice Cunningham Fletcher, published as *Camping with the Sioux*: “We eat breakfast. I can’t eat the dish which the others share and open a can of fruit, golden drop plums, large as peaches, and soon we are off but not till after 8 A.M.”

OCTOBER 21

TRAFALGAR DAY

England

This day commemorates Horatio Nelson’s victory over the combined French and Spanish fleets at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805, and is known as the proudest day in British Naval History. It was traditional at one time for the Royal Naval College to hold a “whitebait dinner” to celebrate the day, but dinners of various styles are held by Navy men all over the world.

In 1850, Peter Cormack Sutherland recorded one Trafalgar Day dinner in the *Journal of a voyage in Baffin’s Bay and Barrow Straits, in the years 1850-1851*.

On Trafalgar day, which every naval officer commemorates with veneration, when our friends, the gallant Sir John Ross, Commander Phillips, and Dr Porteus of the “Felix” met us at dinner aboard the “Lady Franklin”, we had a hearty dish of fresh salmon. Sir John said he would endeavour to get a large one, which he himself should carry to Captain Austin, at Griffiths’ Island, although the distance was at least twenty miles.

AN ICTHYOPHAGOUS CLUB DINNER

1885: USA

The dinner menu for the sixth annual Ichthyophagous Club, held at the Hotel Buckingham, was as follows:

Blue Points

Vin de Graves

Extract of Razor Clams

Bisque of Starfish

Radishes Celery Olives

Royal Sherry

-

Squid, Fried [Chondopterygien]

Winkles, Burgundy Fashion

Sea Spider Crab à l'Infernal

Crayfish du Potomac

Cucumbers Hollandaise Potatoes

Liebfraumilch

-

Skate, Cream Sauce [Acandopterygien]

Crevalle à la Marseillaise

Sea Robins, Baked à l'Amphitrite

Salmon [Royal Fish], Parisian Style

Buisson of Lobster, Tartare Sauce

Pontet Canet

-

Filet of Beef

Mushrooms and Tomatoes Farcies French Peas.

Stewed Terrapin, Buckingham Style.

-

Ichthyophagous Punch

-

Broiled Teal Duck

Lobster Salad Crab Salad Lettuce Salad

G.H. Mumm's Cordon Rouge

-

Neapolitan Ice Cream Fruit Jelly Assorted Cakes

Fancy Pyramide Fruit Cheese

Café

Liqueurs

FOOD & WAR

1918: Britain, World War I

The *Guardian* included an article on this day on the plight of prisoners of war.

Prisoners' sad letters

Hunger, overwork, and ill-treatment

The following are extracts from letters written by British prisoners of war in Germany during the month of April and part of the month of May.

One writes:- "I am working in chemico-manure works near Stettin, which is a large town. It is heavy work what we do, loading up sacks of manure in railway trucks and unloading barges of ironstone. We work ten hours a day, barring Sundays. We get 3d. a day and our food, and we get half a pound of bread and three bowls of soup a day. There is no stay in the food for a man to work on... I am glad to get to bed at nights. I never felt so weak before."

Another writes:- "You ask me if I am still at Doberitz—sorry to say I am at a place called Hansa, working in the coal pits; we put seven twelve-hours' shifts in a week, including night.

"Accommodation is very bad, and all parcels arrive here in a very bad condition. Only last week I received one packet of Swiss bread and one parcel of food; more than half the contents were stolen. Of course it is a bad thing for me to say our parcels are stolen, but we know for a fact that it's someone who knows what the Englishmen's parcels contain, and it's the same man every week, because the French and Russian parcels come in good condition."

1789: French Revolution

There was a serious bread shortage at this time, precipitated by drought conditions and poor wheat crops. Revolutionary tensions were already high, and hunger drove a number of bread riots around this time, with the general populace blaming bakers for the high bread prices. A baker named Denis François was an unfortunate victim of the general frustration and anger on this day, when one hungry woman denounced him, and he was summarily lynched and hanged by the mob. The event precipitated the Constituent Assembly to allow a municipality to institute martial law by the raising of a red flag, and to execute the members of any mob who failed to disperse instantly.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1884: USA

Marcellus G. Edson, of Montreal, Quebec, Canada, was granted Patent No. 306,727 for a method to “Manufacture Peanut Candy.” It was a form of peanut paste, heavily sweetened. Edson’s patent specifications summarized the method and the product:

This invention has reference to a new manufacture of peanuts to form a flavoring-paste from said peanuts and a composition of matter to form sweetmeats and candy therewith.

I take peanuts and roast them in the ordinary manner, and having removed the shells, and preferably (but not necessarily) while the peanuts are yet warm, I place the said nuts in a grinding-mill, such a mill as is used for reducing grain, &c, to flour. Before the peanuts are placed in this mill its grinding or rubbing surfaces must be heated to a temperature of 100° Fahrenheit, or thereabout. If the peanuts were ground cold by a mill having cold grinding-surfaces, the result would be peanut-flour, which result is old and in use; but by heating the stones or other grinding body of the mill before the peanuts are put into it (and maintaining the heat afterward) the peanuts will be ground into a fluid or semi-fluid state, which comes from the mill having the consistency of rather thick or heavy molasses or cream. This, after it has cooled down to about the ordinary temperature of the atmosphere—say 50° to 60° Fahrenheit—will set into a consistency like that of butter, lard, or ointment, and will again become fluid by raising its temperature to about 100° Fahrenheit, and in this liquid form is easily mixed or compounded with flour or fluids.

The above described peanut-paste is particularly adapted for use in the manufacture of sweetmeats and candy, in which it forms a new composition of matter. I take, by weight, one part of the said peanut-paste and about seven parts of sugar, and then proceed to treat this substance thus formed in the ordinary way for the manufacture of sweetmeats and any form of candy required.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769: Polynesia

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks:

“*Tegadu Bay*” . . . Their food at this time of the year consisted of Fish with which instead of bread they eat the roots of a kind of Fern *Pteris crenulata*, very like that which grows upon our commons in England. These were a little roasted on the fire and then beat with a stick which took off the bark and dry outside, what remaind had a sweetish clammyness in it not disagreeable to the taste; it might be esteemd a tolerable food was it not for the quantity of strings and fibres in it which in quantity 3 or 4 times exceeded the soft part; these were swallowd by some but the greater number of people spit them out for which purpose they had a basket standing under them to receive their chewd morsels, in shape and colour not unlike Chaws of Tobacco.

Tho at this time of the year this most homely fare was their principal diet yet in the proper seasons they certainly have plenty of excellent vegetables, tho we have seen no sign of tame animals among them except doggs, very small and ugly. Their plantations were now hardly finishd but so well was the ground tilld that I have seldom seen even in the gardens of curious people land better broke down. In them were planted sweet potatoes, cocos and some one of the cucumber kind, as we judgd from the seed leaves which just appeard above ground; the first of these were planted in small hills, some rangd in rows other in quincunx all laid by a line most regularly, the Cocos were planted in flat land and not yet appeard above ground, the Cucumbers were set in small hollows or dishes much as we do in England. These plantations were from 1 or 2 to 8 or 10 acres each, in the bay might be 150 or 200 acres in cultivation tho we did not see 100 people in all. Each distinct patch was fencd in generally with reeds placd close one by another so that scarce a mouse could creep through.

1805: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day William Clark wrote:

Collins made some excellent beer of the Pasheco quarmash bread of roots which was verry good. obliged to purchase wood at a high rate. last night

we could not collect more dry willows the only fuel, than was barely Suffi[ci]ent to cook Supper, and not a sufficiency to cook brackfast this morning . . . we purchased a little wood to cook our Dog meat and fish.

And Joseph Whitehouse wrote:

we Set out eairly and proceeded on as usal, untill about 8 oClock at which time we halted at an Indian Camp where we bought Some wood and cooked breakfast. bought Some pounded fish from the Natives and Some roots bread which was made up in cakes in form of ginger bread and eat verry well.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1779: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde:

[T]o Mr Kerr's and there dined, spent the aft: supped and spent the evening. . . . We had for dinner a Leg of Pork boiled, a Turkey rosted and a couple of Ducks. We hd for Supper a couple of Fowls boiled, a fine Pheasant rosted ad some cold things. Dinner and Supper served up in China, dishes and plates, Melons, Apples and Pears, Walnuts and small Nutts for a desert.

1801: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde: "Great Rejoicings to be to day on Account of Peace. A bullock to be rosted in the Market-Place &c. . . . Dinner to day, Ham & 2 Fowls boiled &c. . . . N.B. no Bullock rosted at Norwich as talked of."

Woodforde is referring to the Treaty of London, signed on October 1 between France and Britain. It was a preliminary agreement to the Treaty of Amiens, subsequently signed on March 25, 1802.

1852: Australia

From the diary of Ellen Clacy, who accompanied her brother to the Goldfields of Victoria in 1852-1853.

VICTORIA III 1852-1855.

A fire was next kindled, and a kettle full of water (with the tea in it!) was placed on to boil, some home-made bread, brought from Carlshrue, was placed upon the ground, and some chops were toasted on the ends of sticks, which are usually the impromptu toasting-forks of the bush. The old tin plates and pannicans, not quite so bright as once upon a time, but showing, despite sundry bruises and scratches, that they had seen better days, were placed upon the tea-table, which of course was the ground. Two or three knives and forks were on general service, and wandered about from hand to hand as occasion required. Altogether it was a merry, sociable party, and I think I enjoyed that supper better than any I ever tasted before or since.

1855: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau:

Looking into the yard, I see the currant bushes all bare of leaves, as they have been some time; but the gooseberries at the end of their row are covered with reddened leaves. This gradualness in the changing and falling of the leaves produces agreeable effects and contrasts. The currant row is bare, but the gooseberries at the end are full of scarlet leaves still.

I have never liked to have many rich fruits ripening at the same season. When Porter apples, for instance, are ripe, there are also other early apples and pears and plums and melons, *etc.* Nature by her bounteousness thus disgusts us with a sense of repletion—and uncleanness even. Perhaps any one of these fruits would answer as well as all together. She offers us too many good things at once.

OCTOBER 22

THE KING'S CHRISTMAS PUDDING

1927: Britain

The *Times* published a recipe for the king's Christmas pudding, which "this year will be

made entirely of ingredients produced within the Empire.” The recipe was provided by the king’s chef, Mr. Cedard.

The King’s Christmas Pudding. An All-British Recipe

- 5 lb. currants (Australia)
- 5 lb. sultanas (Australia)
- 5 lb. stoned raisins (South Africa)
- 1 ½ lb. minced apple (Canada)
- 5 lb. breadcrumbs (United Kingdom)
- 5 lb. beef suet (New Zealand)
- 2 lb. cut candied peel (South Africa)
- 2 ½ lb flour (United Kingdom)
- 2 ½ lb. Demarara sugar (West Indies)
- 20 eggs (Irish Free State)
- 2 oz. ground cinnamon (Ceylon)
- 1 ½ oz. ground cloves (Zanzibar)
- 1 ½ oz. ground nutmegs (Straits Settlements)
- 1 teaspoonful pudding spice (India)
- 1 gill brandy (Cyprus)
- 2 gills rum (Jamaica)
- 2 quarts old beer (England)

The pudding was also known as the Empire Christmas Pudding. The Empire Marketing Board advised that it would give a special demonstration of how the pudding was to be cooked at the Imperial Fruit Show, which opened in

pudding was to be cooked, at the Imperial Fair Show, which opened in Manchester on October 28.

The Empire Day Movement prepared a pudding from the recipe as a gift for the king. The pudding was “ceremonially prepared by representatives of all parts of the Empire,” on December 1. It was mixed on the roof of Adelaide House “high above the river and within sight of the Pool of London, into which its ingredients may have come” and the pot was put on to boil by the lord mayor himself, in the kitchen of the Mansion House.

THE CRIMEA BANQUET

1856: Dublin, Ireland

A great banquet was held by the Irish government as a tribute to the bravery of the Crimean troops. The only venue big enough to hold the numbers was Stack A—a tobacco warehouse in Dublin’s dockyards, which was transformed for the occasion with furnishings, floral arrangements, and banners celebrating the various battles. The *News of the World* reported that:

The total number of guests at the banquet, all of them decorated with Crimean medals, were 3,000 non-commissioned officers and privates, 50 petty officers, sailors, and marines, 50 enrolled pensioners, 20 Peninsular and Indian veterans, 50 constabulary, 25 coast-guard, 5 metropolitan police, 1 Land Transport Service. . . . The space devoted to spectators was well filled, notwithstanding the high price of admission. . . .

At the head table, besides the Earl of Carlisle and the Lord Mayor where the Lord Chancellor, the Commander of the Forces, the admirals in command of the naval stations in Ireland, peers who were members of the committee, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, the Under Secretary for Ireland, the French Consul, &c.

A table was provided for the officers in charge of the troops, about 120 in number. The gallery accommodated about 1,209, the total number present in the Banqueting-hall being about 5,000.

The following is the bill of fare: 175 ribs, rounds and sirloins of roast beef, 175 legs of mutton roast, 175 hams, 200 geese, 200 turkeys, 100 venison pasties, 350 meat pies, 260 plum puddings, 3,500 lbs of bread, 7,000 lbs of

potatoes, 3,500 pint bottles of port, 3,500 quart bottles of Dublin porter.

A BIRTHDAY IN THE TRENCHES

1915: Turkey, World War I

Some ANZAC soldiers held a modest celebration on the battlefield of Gallipoli on this day, in honor of their Quartermaster.

Quartermaster's Birthday Party, 22nd Battalion.

Shrapnell Gully—Anzac—Gallipoli

Menu.

1. Stew
2. Tinned Chicken
3. Slapdash Pancake.

The menu was obviously made up from the military rations. Military orders set down in April 1915 said,

[T]he scale of rations after leaving Egypt [a stopping point en route to Gallipoli] will be:-

- 1¼ lbs. Fresh Meat or 1 lb. (nominal) preserved meat.
- 1¼ lbs, Bread or 1 lb. Biscuit or 1 lb. Flour.
- 4 ozs. Bacon.
- 3 ozs. Cheese.
- 2 ozs. Peas, Beans or dried Potatoes.
- ⅝ ozs. Tea. ¼ lb. Jam.
- 3 ozs. Sugar.

- ½ oz. Salt, 1/20 oz. Mustard, 1/36 oz. Pepper.
- 1/10 gill Limejuice. at discretion of G.O.C. on recommendation of S.M.O
- ½ gill Rum. at discretion of G.O.C. on recommendation of S.M.O
- Tobacco not exceeding 2 ozs per week at discretion of G.O.C. on recommendation of S.M.O

FOOD ADDITIVES

1924: Britain

The minister of health banned preservatives in cream, butter, margarine, and other foodstuffs on this day.

1976: USA

The FDA banned red dye #4 as a result of evidence that it may be implicated in causing bladder tumors in dogs.

1981: USA

The FDA approved the artificial sweetener Aspartame (NutraSweet) for tabletop use.

DINING & DIPLOMACY

1995: New York

Fidel Castro was in New York for the United Nations fiftieth anniversary celebrations. He was not invited to the lord mayor's dinner, or President Clinton's banquet, but visited the Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem on this day, where he was warmly received. Castro made a point of noting that he had been openly snubbed by other world leaders:

This is the 35th anniversary of my first visit to this neighborhood. . . . Now,

the incredible thing is that I am still expelled. I am still being left out of the dinners and banquets, as if nothing has changed over all those years, as if there was still a Cold War.

FOOD FIRST

1885: USA

The first reference to the word *mousse*, referring to “[a] sweet or savoury dish having a light, airy, or frothy texture, freq. made from a purée or other base, stiffened with whipped cream, gelatin, or egg whites, etc., and usually served chilled” given in *The Oxford English Dictionary* is in an article on the *Olean (N.Y.) Democrat* dated this day. The snippet says “Out of these pretty and perishable dishes one eats cafe mousse or some other delicious fancy ice.”

The second citation given in the OED is from the English newspaper the *Daily News* of July 15, 1899, and it is in the context of a recipe.

While strawberries are still with us, the following Mousse should be tried: Crush a pound of ripe berries through a sieve to obtain all the juice and the finer part of the pulp; mix with this half a pound of fine sugar, the juice of a fresh lemon, and a quarter of an ounce of isinglass. Put into a saucepan and stir over the fire until both the sugar and isinglass are dissolved, then put into a basin and set aside. When cold stir in the whites of two eggs and the contents of a sixpenny pot of thick cream, both beaten together unto a stiff froth; mix these in with the syrup with a light lifting motion, so as not to quite lose the distinction of red and white, then pour all into a wetted mould and set on ice for two or three hours.

A peach or apricot Mousse would be made very similarly, using the pulp of a dozen peaches or apricots, only with these it would be better to allow the syrup to cool in the mould, and on ice, and when it has thickened, to fold in the cream, without stirring either the one or the other. These Mousses should turn out quite solid, but will never be hard on account of the cream.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1774: New Zealand

During Captain James Cook's second voyage, the naturalist Johann Reinhold Forster described the visit of a Maori ship. They were at Cape Kidnappers, on the southern end of Hawke's Bay on the North Island of New Zealand. The Maori visitors do not seem to be familiar with the yam, although other groups further north knew them.

Our young Borabora man, Mahine . . . hearing from us that these people were not possessed of coconuts and yams, produced some of these nuts and roots with a view to offer them to the chief, but upon our assuring him the climate was unfavourable to the growth of palm trees, he only presented the yams, whilst we made an effort to convince the chief of the value of the presents which he had received . . . and to plant the roots. He seemed at last to comprehend our meaning.

1805: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. William Clark, at what is now the Des Chutes river, wrote:

I observe great numbers of Stacks of pounded Salmon neatly preserved in the following manner, . . . thus preserved those fish may be kept Sound and sweet Several years, as those people inform me, Great quantities as they inform us are sold to the whites people who visit the mouth of this river as well as to the nativs below. we purchased a Dog for Supper, some fish and with dificuelty precured as much wood as cooked Supper, which we also purchased.

1844: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia: "Pigeons, mutton-birds (Struthidia), are frequent, and provided us with several messes; iguanas are considered great delicacies."

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1554: Italy

From the diary of Jacopo Carrucci da Pontormo: “Today, the 22nd of the month, 1554, came back home and stayed alone there waiting for the landlord until 11 p.m., then ate a pancake, eight ounces of bread, a nut and a dried fig and two pieces of cooked cod.”

1660: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys: “After that to dinner at home upon some ribs of roast beef from the Cooks (which of late we have been forced to do because of our house being always under the painters’ and other people’s hands, that we could not dress it ourselves).”

1782: America

Thomas Jefferson’s garden book contains a note on this day about the production of vinegar: “Seventeen bushels of winter grapes (the stems first excluded) made 40 gallons of vinegar of the first running, & pouring water on, yeilded gallons of a weaker kind. 20 bushels of peaches will make 75 gall. of mobby, i.e 5/12 of its bulk.”

1791: Nova Scotia

From John Clarkson’s first-person account of his voyage to Nova Scotia to recruit Black Christian settlers for Sierra Leone:

October 22nd I went accompanied by Mr. Taylor on board Dolphin. . . . We put into Port L’Herbert and anchored about 3 miles up the river . . . there are a few wretched inhabitants on the eastern side of the river. . . . Mr. Taylor accompanied me on shore, on entering one of their huts we met with the most agreeable reception from a young girl about 15 years of age intrusted with the care of the house and two small children, her brothers during the absence of her parents, who had for several days gathering in their winter stock of potatoes, on the contrary side of river. . . . Having tasted no food since the preceding day we were rejoiced at the prospect of getting something to eat upon enquiry we found the whole stock of provisions consisted only of potatoes and butter milk, with a few dried salt fish; we made a hearty supper on this fare, and after due acknowledgement for our feast, we quitted the hut and made an attempt to reach our schooner.

OCTOBER 23

RAILROAD DINNER

1847: London, Canada

The Great Western Railway had its official beginning with the turning of the first sod by local political leader Colonel Thomas Talbot on this day. Talbot and other local celebrities, dignitaries, and militia then sat down to a fine celebratory dinner at the Western Hotel, situated right beside the planned railway line.

The menu card was pre-printed, and some areas are left blank—perhaps because it was uncertain what ingredients might be available, and no soup was listed.

BILL OF FARE.

ROAST.

Beef, Pork, Veal, Lamb, Mutton, Turkey, Chickens, Ducks, Geese.

BOILED.

Turkey with Oyster and Cranberry Sauce, Ham, Corned Beef,

Chickens, Tongue, Calf 's Head, Mutton, and Veal.

ENTREES OR SIDE DISHES.

VEGETABLES OF THE SEASON.

Kole-Slau, Tomatoes, Cress, Celery.

PASTRY.

Pies—Apple, Puddings—Rice,

Cranberry, Plum,

Mince, Apple,

Pumpkin.

FRUIT AND NUTS.

Grapes, Raisins, Almonds and Walnuts.

LIST OF WINES.

MADEIRA. PORT

Blackburns Sup'r. 6s. 3d. Hunts' Very Old. 12s. 6d.

Woods' Old 5s. 0d. Regina Port, 6s. 3d.

Grahams' 5s. 6d.

SHERRY.

Gordon's Sup'r Pale. 6s. 3d. Pale Sherry, (old) 7s. 6d.

Gordon's Fine Gold. 5s. 3d. Dempster's Brown. 5s. 0d.

CLARET.

Sauterne, 7s. 6d. Medoc, (good.) 6s. 3d

CHAMPAIGNE.

Reinhart, 10s. 0d. Sillery, 6s. 8d.

OLD PALE BRANDY, 5s.

FINE INDIA ALE, 2s. 6d., pints, 1s. 3d.

PORTER, BROWN STOUT, 2s. 6d.

Gentlemen sending for Wines will please forward their names.

DINNER IN A CRISIS

1962: USA

During the Cuban missile crisis, President and Mrs. Kennedy dined with friends at the White House. The menu was:

Rockfish Souffle Ambassade

Breast of Pheasant St. Hubert

Wild Rice

Green beans aux Amandes

Salade Mimosa

Brie Cheese

Biscuit Glacee aux Peches

Petits-fours sec

Salade Mimosa

Make a salad dressing by mixing two parts of olive oil with one part wine vinegar and adding a little chopped parsley, chervil, chive and tarragon. Stir a tablespoonful of raw cream into every gill of dressing.

Dress the small yellow leaves from the hearts of fresh lettuces with the mixture given above. Pass 1 or 2 hard-boiled eggs—yolk and white together—through a fine sieve and scatter on top of the lettuce.

—*Royal Menus* (1960) Rene Roussin (Chef de Cuisine to King George VI)

CHOCOLATE

1769: New York

The *Weekly Post-Boy* carried an advertisement for chocolate (still a beverage only at this time): “Peter Lowe, Living at the Upper End of Maiden-Lane, near Broadway & opposite to Lavery’s Street, Makes and Sells Chocolate equal in

Goodness to any made in this City, at the current Price.”

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1805: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day Patrick Gass wrote: “We got several dogs from these Indians, which we find strong wholesome diet.”

1844: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt’s journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

No game, except a kangaroo rat, pigeons, ducks, and mutton-birds. Mr. Phillips brought a crawfish from the creek: it had just thrown off its old shell. Fresh-water muscles plentiful, though not of the size of those of the Condamine. A small rat was caught this morning amongst our flour bags; it had no white tip at the tail, nor is the tail so bushy as that of the rabbit-rat: probably it was a young animal.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1554: Italy

From the diary of Jacopo Carrucci da Pontormo: “In the evening of the 23rd, a soup of cooked mutton, and two baked apples and ten ounces of bread and a quarter cup of wine, and I began to broach the cask.”

1855: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau:

Now is the time for chestnuts. A stone cast against the trees shakes them down in showers upon one’s head and shoulders. But I cannot excuse myself for using the stone. It is not innocent, it is not just, so to maltreat the tree that feeds us. I am not disturbed by considering that if I thus shorten its

life I shall not enjoy its fruit so long, but am prompted to a more innocent course by motives purely of humanity. I sympathize with the tree, yet I heaved a big stone against the trunks like a robber,—not too good to commit murder. I trust that I shall never do it again. These gifts should be accepted, not merely with gentleness, but with a certain humble gratitude. The tree whose fruit we would obtain should not be too rudely shaken even. It is not a time of distress, when a little haste and violence even might be pardoned. It is worse than boorish, it is criminal, to inflict an unnecessary injury on the tree that feeds or shadows us. Old trees are our parents, and our parents' parents, perchance. If you would learn the secrets of Nature, you must practice more humanity than others. The thought that I was robbing myself by injuring the tree did not occur to me, but I was affected as if I had cast a rock at a sentient being,—with a duller sense than my own, it is true, but yet a distant relation. Behold a man cutting down a tree to come at the fruit! What is the moral of such an act?

OCTOBER 24

DINING & DIPLOMACY

1905: Spain

The king of Spain, Alphonse XIII, was entertained at dinner at the French Embassy in Madrid on this day, and the menu was a fine showpiece of classical French dishes.

Consommé à l'Infante

Crème Printanière

Cassolettes à la Maintenon

Saumon braisé à l'Ancienne

Selle de Veau à la Russe

Canards Rouennais Bigarade

Foie gras en croute

Sorbets au Kirsch

Punch à la Romaine

Dindonneaux truffés

Cailles en chaudfroid

Salade Metternich

Petits Pois à la Française

Céleri à la Castillane

Glace Dauphine

Feuilles de Palmiers

Pailles au Parmesan

THE IRISH FAMINE

1846: Ireland

The great famine was at its height, and it was reported that many were eating nettles and weeds in a futile attempt to ward off starvation. There is no doubt that a major factor in the devastating loss of life in Ireland was not solely due to the potato blight, but to the attitude and actions of the English politicians of the time in response to the crop failure. The official English line at the time was that by this time there was sufficient produce available, and the distribution of food from the stores was ordered to be stopped on this day. It may be that on paper there was sufficient food in the country, but it is certain that it was not accessible to the mass of starving Irish peasants.

A letter published in the *Times* on this day illustrates the degree of misunderstanding of the situation. The writer of this letter was clearly a man of some means, and did not appreciate, or chose not to appreciate, that the pigs were owned by the landed gentry, not the peasants, who in any case had not the money to buy meat—or the pots or fuel to cook it. The throwing of pigs into the

river was no doubt the act of a callous landlord looking after his own interests, with no thought of cooking and providing the meat to the despised, disposable Irish peasant or laborer.

Sir,—Can you give credence to the fact, that, amid the want and starvation in this country a fine “roasting pig” can be bought for tenpence?

A few days since I purchased a fine roasting pig for tenpence, which when killed and dressed weighed 11lb! Yet, such are the ridiculous prejudices of my unaccountable countrymen, that they would sooner prey upon rotten potatoes than eat delicate and wholesome meat at a penny a-pound.

I am credibly informed that many young pigs have been thrown into the river here from want of potatoes to feed them; but one will naturally ask, why not eat them?

Your obedient servant, Omagh, County of Tyrone.

PROHIBITION

1922

At the height of Prohibition, a British law compelled an American line ship to carry five quarts of brandy for medicinal purposes on this day, as a condition of granting clearance papers to leave London.

Compelled to Carry Brandy

The President Adams of the United States line, operated for the United States government, had five quarts of brandy aboard when she arrived yesterday at pier 8, Hoboken, from London, by way of Queenstown. The British law compels the steamers to carry gallon of brandy for every 100 steer age passengers for use if needed in illness, and clearance papers were refused by the British board of trade until the required amount of “medical comforts” were on board for the 115 steerage passengers. The law is an old one and has always been rigidly enforced.

—*Amsterdam [NY] Evening Reporter*, October 26, 1922

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia. The party made many experiments with plants that they came across, hoping to find an acceptable coffee substitute.

Some sheldrakes and wallabies were seen, and a bustard was shot by Charley: large fish were splashing in the water. I gathered the large vine-bean, with green blossoms, which had thick pods containing from one to five seeds. Its hard covering, by roasting, became very brittle; and I pounded the cotyledons, and boiled them for several hours. This softened them, and made a sort of porridge, which, at all events, was very satisfying. Judging by the appearance of large stones which were frequently found, in the camps of the natives, still covered with the mealy particles of some seed which had been pounded upon them, it would seem that the natives used the same bean; but I could not ascertain how they were able to soften them. It did not make good coffee; and, when boiled in an iron pot, the water became very dark.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1662: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys: "So home and dined there with my wife upon a most excellent dish of tripes of my own directing, covered with mustard, as I have heretofore seen them done at my Lord Crews; of which I made a very great meal and sent for a glass of wine for myself."

1665: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys. London is returning to life after the plague:

Up, and after doing some business at the office, I to London, and there, in my way, at my old oyster shop in Gracious Streete, bought two barrels of my fine woman of the shop, who is alive after all the plague, which now is the first observation or inquiry we make at London concerning everybody

we knew before it. So to the 'Change, where very busy with several people, and mightily glad to see the 'Change so full, and hopes of another abatement still the next week. Off the 'Change I went home with Sir G. Smith to dinner, sending for one of my barrels of oysters, which were good, though come from Colchester, where the plague hath been so much. Here a very brave dinner, though no invitation; and, Lord! to see how I am treated, that come from so mean a beginning, is matter of wonder to me. But it is God's great mercy to me, and His blessing upon my taking pains, and being punctual in my dealings. After dinner Captain Cocke and I about some business, and then with my other barrel of oysters home to Greenwich, sent them by water to Mrs. Penington.

1773: Scotland

From James Boswell's *The Journal of a Tour to the Hebrides with Samuel Johnson*: "He then indulged in a playful fancy, in making a *Meditation on a Pudding*, of which I hastily wrote down, in his presence, the following note; which, though imperfect, may serve to give my readers some idea of it."

Let us seriously reflect of what a pudding is composed. It is composed of flour that once waved in the golden grain, and drank the dews of the morning; of milk pressed from the swelling udder by the gentle hand of the beauteous milkmaid, whose beauty and innocence might have recommended a worse draught; who, while she stroked the udder, indulged no ambitious thoughts of wandering in palaces, formed no plans for the destruction of her fellow-creatures; milk, which is drawn from the cow, that useful animal, that eats the grass of the field, and supplies us with that which made the greatest part of the food of mankind in the age which the poets have agreed to call golden. It is made with an egg, that miracle of nature, which the theoretical Burnet has compared to creation. An egg contains water within its beautiful smooth surface; and an unformed mass, by the incubation of the parent, becomes a regular animal, furnished with bones and sinews, and covered with feathers.—Let us consider; can there be more wanting to complete the *Meditation on a Pudding*? If more is wanting, more may be found. It contains salt, which keeps the sea from putrefaction salt, which is made the image of intellectual excellence, contributes to the formation of a pudding.

1798: England

Jane Austen wrote to her sister Cassandra: “‘*Bull and George,*’ *Dartford: Wednesday.* We have got apartments up two pair of stairs, . . . sate down to dinner a little after five, and had some beefsteaks and a boiled fowl, but no oyster sauce.”

1857: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau:

To Smith’s chestnut grove. I get a couple of quarts of chestnuts by patiently brushing the thick beds of leaves aside with my hand in successive concentric circles till I reach the trunk; more than half under one tree. I believe I get more by resolving, where they are reasonably thick, to pick all under one tree first. Begin at the tree and brush the leaves with your right hand in toward the stump, while your left holds the basket, and so go round and round it in concentric circles, each time laying bare about two feet in width, till you get as far as the boughs extend. You may presume that you have got about all then. It is best to reduce it to a system. Of course you will shake the tree first, if there are any on it. The nuts lie commonly two or three together, as they fell.

1881: USA

From the fieldwork diary of Alice Cunningham Fletcher, published as *Camping with the Sioux*:

It was 2.30 when we reached the camping place. Wajapa coming in late, leading the horse he had been riding and was used up.

Our fire was made in a hole, the wind blowing, and I ate bread and apricots, sour and horrid—and drank wretched coffee. The management of food is being poor in many ways. Things are getting so disagreeable that I hardly know how to get on at all.

At dinner . . . I had a can of corned beef opened in spite of sulky remarks and ate my first meat with a bit of dry bread, but drank no water and then to bed as quickly as possible.

FOOD FIRSTS

1844: England

John Rhodes Pidding was a well-known East India Company ship's captain and tea merchant. He was the first to buy Indian tea (see **January 10**), which he blended, packaged, and marketed under his own brand. An advertisement in the Carlisle Patriot of this day shows his advertising style:

AS SUPPLIED TO THE ROYAL TABLE.

CAPTAIN PIDDING'S HOWQUA'S MIXTURE TEA

Is an Admixture of 40 Rare Black Teas.

PRODUCED on as many different plantations, each Tea differing from the rest, and possessing a flavour, a fragrance, or strength, peculiar to itself. Blended together in the proper proportions, they comprise all that is desirable in Tea. This discovery was not the effect of chance, but of many great advantages united in one individual, and the result of numerous experiments and the most minute analysis. For another to produce the same result, he must possess equal skill, the same discriminating taste, equal power of procuring the 40 various Teas required, and know the exact proportions of each kind used,—and though he may never once have visited China, he must have had equal opportunities of securing to himself, its productions, with one who, like Captain Pidding, has spent years there in acquiring these advantages, and to whom alone Howqua—years before his death—imparted at Canton, the secret of compounding his Mixture.

Yet there are upwards of 500 retailers pretending to sell Tea, they call "Howqua's Mixture"—each mixture differing from all the others. Now as there can be but ONE REAL "Howqua's Mixture", it follows that, as 500

different medleys are offered—499 must be spurious. The 499 counterfeits are so many evidences of the superiority of the ONE GENUINE. And it would be absurd to suppose that Captain Pidding, with advantages, the result of Eight Voyages made to China, and 5 years spent in that country

result of eight voyages made to China, and 5 years spent in that country, would be so silly—even were it possible—as to yield them up to 500 others, or impart to them so valuable a secret.

The very great celebrity this Tea has acquired having tempted many unprincipled persons to give similar, or nearly similar titles to their own spurious mixtures, to guard against such imposition, purchasers should observe that

“SIGNATURE THUS”

“CAPT. JOHN PIDDING.”

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1955: USA

The first domestic microwave oven was sold on this day by the Tappan Company, which had licensed the technology developed by Raytheon (*see January 24*).

The new oven was designed to fit onto the top of a conventional oven, and was marketed as an electric range with a “cool oven.” It was still very large and expensive by today’s standards (it was priced at \$1,295) but a counter-top model at the far more affordable price of under \$500 was introduced in 1967.

FOOD & WAR

1942: Britain, World War II

Milk was rationed to 2½ pints per week per person. Increased pressure on sugar sup-

plies also led to a directive from the Ministry of Food that banned the use of sugar decorations on cakes. The result was a new industry of fake cardboard wedding “cakes” with chalk “icing” being offered for hire for these occasions.

1951: Britain, Post–World War II

Winston Churchill won the election on this day, and was again the prime minister in spite of his age and failing health. In his election broadcast he said:

The uncertainty at home has got to come to an end if we are to play our part in the world and receive due consideration for our British point of view and, still more, if we are to keep a decent standard of life for our people and even keep them all alive. Remember we have brought into being through the progress of Victorian times 50 million people in an island which grows the food for only 30 millions and that all the rest has to be provided for by the goods and services we can render to other countries. There never was a community of 50 million people standing at our high level of civilization on such an insecure foundation.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1805: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day William Clark wrote:

I deturmined to pass through this place notwithstanding the horrid appearance of this agitated gut swelling, boiling & whorling in every direction, (which from the top of the rock did not appear as bad as when I was in it; however we passed Safe to the astonishment of all the Inds. of the last Lodges who viewed us from the top of the rock . . . the first wooden houses in which Indians have lived Since we left those in the vicinity of the Illinois, I counted 107 stacks of dried pounded fish in different places on those rocks which must have contained 10,000 lb of neet fish, Peter Crusat played on the violin and the men danced which delighted the natives, who Shew every civility towards us.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1671: France

The Marquise de Sevigné wrote in a letter to her daughter on this day, and once again mentions chocolate: “The marquise [de Coëtlogan] . . . took so much chocolate during her pregnancy last year that she produced a small boy as black as the devil, who died.”

as the devil, who used.

Mme. Sevigné was far too worldly wise to believe it was the chocolate consumption during her pregnancy that caused one of her aristocratic neighbors to give birth to a black child. It was, however, known that the lady's household staff included a black manservant (a very fashionable household accessory at the time). Chocolate was commonly believed to be an aphrodisiac at the time, on account of which it was widely condemned by the clergy.

OCTOBER 26

ZEPPELIN MENU

1933

The Graf Zeppelin made a special trip to the Century of Progress Exposition in Chicago. This flight originated in Friedrichshafen, Germany on October 14, 1933, and arrived in Chicago on October 26, after stops along the way in Brazil (Pernambuco and Rio de Janeiro), Miami, Florida, and Akron, Ohio. The airship stayed in Chicago only twenty-five minutes before heading off again. A menu card for the flight shows the fine food offered to the passengers:

Schildkroetsuppe

Fischnitten nach

Helgoland Salzkatoffel

Ochsenlende enlisch gebraten fein garniert

Grüner Salat

Bueckler Eiscreme

Klingebaeck

SPAM

1937: USA

Geo. A. Hormel & Company, of Austin, Minnesota, registered the trademark SPAM for their “Canned Meats, Namely, Spiced Ham,” stating that the name had been used since May 11, 1937. The product’s popularity is only exceeded in scale by the jokes and puns made in its name. Although promoted by the company as “Miracle Meat,” it is referred to by many as “Mystery Meat.”

SPAM is now produced in many different flavors and styles, including Hickory Smoked, Hot & Spicy, Less Sodium, and Lite. There are even porkless versions, such as the Oven Roasted Turkey SPAM.

PUDDINGS, REWARDED

1530: England

The record books of the household of Henry VIII show an intriguing payment made on

this day: “Oct. 26, 1530. paied to the wif that makd the king podings at hamptoncorte, vjs. Vijjd. [six shillings and eightpence].”

The “wife” who made puddings for the king was probably a Mistress Alice Cornwallis (or Cornewallies). Records of the time show that a “Principall Place” in St. Katherine, Christchurch, which had formerly belonged to Evesham Abbey, was granted to Edward and Alice Cornwallis by Henry VIII in September 1540.

It is to be noted that these “puddings” were not desserts but would have been some sort of sausage or other savory dish cooked in skins.

FOOD & WAR

1914: World War I, the Commission for Relief in Belgium

M. Francqui of the Brussels Comité Central wrote to Hoover, detailing the enormous difficulties, and outlining the task ahead:

All this shows you the gravity of the situation and the urgency there is, consequently, that there should be sent to Rotterdam as much foodstuffs as possible. . . . In normal times there are in Belgium nearly 8,000,000 people to feed. Therefore, in mentioning 60,000 tons of wheat as being

indispensable for the country you will see that I estimate less than 300 grams of wheat per inhabitant and per diem, which gives a little less than 200 grams of flour per person. This quantity is evidently insufficient, but account must be taken of the 15,000 tons of maize which I have also asked for. With this maize we will make flour which we will mix with the wheaten flour, which will thus bring up the daily ration per person to nearly 300 grams.

1940: Britain, World War II

The Ministry of Food approved a plan for subsidizing potatoes to fish-friers. The great importance of “fish and chips” throughout the country, especially in industrial areas, was recognized, as was the fact that fish-friers had been “up against it” because of the scarcity and high prices of potatoes.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1805: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day William Clark wrote: “[O]ne man gilled a Salmon trout which we had fried in a little Bears oil which a Chief gave us yesterday and I think the finest fish I ever tasted.”

1811: USA

From the journal of Wilson Price Hunt’s overland expedition in 1811–1812:

On the 26th the rapids were again numerous but not precarious. In some places the water was calm. We left the mountains and took a northwesterly route. When we landed to visit a camp of Indians, the poor creatures fled at our approach. By making signs of friendship, I persuaded one of them to return. He was on horseback and seemed better equipped than those whom I had seen earlier. He had some trout and some dried meat that he traded for a few knives, but his fear of us was so great that I could not get him to show me, by sign language, the route that I should take. His only concern was that I not take away his fish and meat and that I commend him to the care of the Great Spirit.

1844: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia. The party cooked up the hide which had been used to contain his botanical specimens.

We enjoyed most gratefully our two wallabies, which were stewed, and to which I had added some green hide to render the broth more substantial. This hide was almost five months old, and had served as a case to my botanical collection, which, unfortunately, I had been compelled to leave behind. It required, however, a little longer stewing than a fresh hide, and was rather tasteless.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1662: London., England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys: "Home and dined; and Mr. Sympson, my Joyner that doth my dining room, and my brother Tom with me to a delicate fat pig."

1856: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau:

The persimmon (*Diospyros Virginiana*) quite common. Saw some trees quite full of fruit. There was a little left on the trees when I left, November 24th, but I should think it was in its prime about the end of the first week of November, i.e., what would readily shake off. Before, it was commonly puckery. In any case it furs the mouth just like the choke-cherry. It is not good for much. They would be more edible if it were not for the numerous large seeds, and when you have rejected them there is little but skin left. Yet I was surprised that the fruit was not more generally gathered.

OCTOBER 27

SUPPER IN A CRISIS

1962: USA

During the Cuban missile crisis, President Kennedy and his advisor David Powers had a late supper at the White House.

Boiled chicken

Carrots

Potatoes

Squash.

A COON SUPPER

1897: USA

A Coon Supper was offered at Bugbee House, in Putnam, Connecticut, on this day. The supper was in honor of someone named Morse—perhaps Orrin Morse, a local manufacturer.

Morse's Coon Supper.

Soup

Bouillon

Roast

Eastford Coon Jericho Sauce.

Entrees.

Potato Salad Squirrel Pie.

Quail on Toast.

Vegetables.

Mashed Potato. Sweet Potato. Turnips.

Boiled Onions.

Relishes.

Red Cabbage. Stuffed Peppers. Celery.

Pickled Onions. Queen Olives.

Mixed Pickles. Tomato Catsup. Gherkins.

Pastry.

Apple Pie. Squash Pie.

Dessert.

Grapes. Pears. Bananas.

How To Cook Raccoon

Opossum, Otter, Raccoon, Skunk, Woodchuck, Fox, etc.

We cannot say that we have had much experience in cooking the above, but all these animals are eaten by many persons in different parts of this and other countries. We have eaten of all of them except the raccoon, and we must say that we found them good.

It is well known that when our soldiers retook possession of Ship Island, they found plenty of raccoons on it, and ate all they could catch. One day we happened to meet a sub-officer who was there at the time, and enquired of him about it. He said he had never eaten any raccoons before, and did not know that they were eatable; but now he would eat them as readily as rabbits, as they were quite as good.

The best time to eat either of the animals enumerated above is from Christmas to the 15th of February; squirrels also are not good in warm weather.

How to prepare them.—As soon as the animal is killed skin it, take the

inside out, save the liver and heart, and wash well with lukewarm water, and a little salt, in and outside; then wipe dry with a towel, put inside of it a few leaves of sage, bay leaves, mint and thyme, and sew it up. Hang it outside in a place sheltered from the sun, such as the northern side of a building; leave it thus five or six days, then take off and cook.

How to Cook an Opossum, An Otter, Raccoon, etc.

Take out the leaves of sage, etc. which you put in the animal before exposing it to the weather. Pound well the liver and heart with about the same quantity of bacon, then mix that with two or three teaspoonfuls of chopped parsley, a pinch of grated nutmeg, salt and pepper; stuff the animal with that mixture, and also with six small onions fried in butter, and a bunch of seasoning composed of four sprigs of parsley, three of thyme, two cloves, two cloves of garlic, and two bay leaves, and sew it up again. Butter it well all over, place it on a spit before a very sharp fire; put three or four sage leaves in the dripping pan, and baste often with the drippings. Serve it when cooked with the gravy, throwing away the sage leaves.

—*What to Eat, and how to Cook it* (New York, 1863) by Pierre Blot.

FOOD FIRSTS

1760

The first mention of ravioli in an English text occurs in *Letters from Portugal, Spain, Italy, & Germany in the Years 1759, 1760, and 1791*, by Christopher Hervey. The author was in Bibbiena, in Tuscany, visiting the Franciscan sanctuary of La Verna (which he calls Alverna). They are provided with dinner, and waited on by the friars.

I do not think our dinner was remarkably good, but the subtle air we then breathed so near heaven gave us a remarkable appetite. Our food consisted in some macaroni, raw ham, boiled beef, or *bouillie*, and some other stewed dishes of I do not know what, except that among them there was a dish of ravioli, or cheese made into a pudding. They finished with a desert of bad fruit, nothing of that sort growing on the bleak mountain of the Alverna.

MESS SOUP

1795: England

The recipe for Colonel Paynter's mess soup for the marines at Portsmouth was given in the *London Evening Post* of this day:

Take three pounds of the shins of beef, or of the stickings, or any of the coarse or cheap parts of beef; put these into twelve quarts of water, which must boil gently for three hours; then add one pound of Scotch-barley, and boil four hours more, during which time, add six pounds of good potatoes, and half a pound of onions or leeks, some parsley, thyme, or savory; season the whole with pepper and salt; any additional vegetables, or split-pease should be added, and half a pound of bacon cut into thin slices will make it more savory.

In cities and towns many bones may be procured from the butcher, which may answer the purpose of the meat, and will be much cheaper. This potage is sufficient for twelve men.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1970: USA

The Van Brode Milling Company registered SPORK for a combination plastic spoon, fork and knife at the USPTO on this date, but the registration was discontinued a few years later. The word *spork* was not coined by the Van Brode Company, but first appeared in the 1909 supplement to the *Century Dictionary*, where it was described as a trade name and “a ‘portmanteau-word’ applied to a long, slender spoon having, at the end of the bowl, projections resembling the tines of a fork.”

There have been many combination-cutlery patents over the last century and a half (see February 3) and these go by many names, including splayd, sporf, spife, and knork.

FIRE IN A PICKLE FACTORY

2004: England

A fire beginning in the early hours of this day almost destroyed the Premier Foods factory at Bury St. Edmonds, which produces one of Britain's popular and iconic brands—Branston Pickle. This is a dark, sweet chutney-style condiment considered by many as an essential accompaniment to cheese, and an intrinsic element of the popular “Ploughman's Lunch.” The possibility of a Branston Pickle shortage over Christmas led to some panic buying of the product, and was an unexpected bonus for at least one small pickle-producer in the area.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1685: London, England

From the diary of John Evelyn:

I was invited to dine at Sir Stephen Fox's with my Lord Lieutenant, where was such a dinner for variety of all things as I had seldom seen, and it was so for the trial of a master-cook whom Sir Stephen had recommended to go with his Lordship into Ireland; there were all the dainties not only of the season, but of what art could add, venison, plain solid meat, fowl, baked and boiled meats, banquet, in exceeding plenty, and exquisitely dressed. There also dined my Lord Ossory and Lady (the Duke of Beaufort's daughter), my Lady Treasurer, Lord Combury, and other visitors.

The word *banquet* at this time referred to a final course of fruit, nuts, and sweetmeats—the forerunner of our dessert course.

1794: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde: “Very dull, wet, melancholy day, but mild. Dinner to day, Cottage Pye, and a Neck of Mutton roasted.”

Woodforde's reference to “cottage pie” is the first known mention of this phrase. It is not certain what he meant by the expression: it is today taken to mean a pie made from minced meat with a mashed potato topping, the name coming from its simplicity and cheapness (i.e., it is something that a cottager would prepare) or from the fancied resemblance of the potato topping to a thatched cottage roof.

1798: England

Jane Austen wrote to her sister Cassandra on this day: “*Steventon: Saturday. . . .* Our dinner was very good yesterday, and the chicken boiled perfectly tender; therefore I shall not be obliged to dismiss Nanny on that account.”

1820: At Sea

From *The Journal of Mr William Hamilton Surgeon & Superintendent for the Ship “Maria” on its second passage from England to Van Dieman’s Land as a Convict transport, between 16th June 1820 and 6th December 1820*: “Weather fine with a fresh breeze. Bedding up. Prison decks cleaned & inspected. Convicts on deck as usual. None on (the) Sick List, and the additional supply of lime juice and sugar has crushed the progress of scurvy.”

1855: U.S.A.

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau:

I try one of the wild apples in my desk. It is remarkable that the wild apples which I praise as so spirited and racy when eaten in the fields and woods, when brought into the house have a harsh and crabbed taste. As shells and pebbles must be beheld on the seashore, so these October fruits must be tasted in a bracing walk amid the somewhat bracing airs of late October. To appreciate their wild and sharp flavors, it seems necessary that you be breathing the sharp October or November air. The outdoor air and exercise which the walker gets give a different tone to his palate, and he craves a fruit which the sedentary would call harsh and crabbed even. The palate rejects a wild apple eaten in the house—so of haws and acorns—and demands a tamed one, for here you miss that October air which is the wine it is eaten with. I frequently pluck wild apples of so rich and spicy a flavor that I wonder all orchardists do not get a scion from them, but when I have brought home my pockets full, and taste them in the house, they are unexpectedly harsh, crude things. They must be eaten in the fields, when your system is all aglow with exercise, the frosty weather nips your fingers (in November), the wind rattles the bare boughs and rustles the leaves, and the jay is heard screaming around.

So there is one thought for the field, another for the house. I would have my

SO THERE IS ONE THOUGHT FOR THE FIELD, ANOTHER FOR THE HOUSE. I WOULD HAVE MY thoughts, like wild apples, to be food for walkers, and will not warrant them to be palatable if tasted in the house.

To appreciate the flavor of those wild apples requires vigorous and healthy senses, papillæ firm and erect on the tongue and palate, not easily tamed and flattened. Some of those apples might be labelled, "To be eaten in the wind."

OCTOBER 28

DINING AND DIPLOMACY

1532: Calais, France

When King Henry VIII of England and King Francois I of France met on this day, the record of the meal served by Henry to Francois shows that that there was already a clear difference in the style of dressing the food between the two countries.

The Sunday at night . . . the French kyng was serued iii. courses, & his meat dressed after the French fashion, & the kyng of England had like courses after the englishe fashion, the first course of euery kynd was 40 dishes, the second 60, and the third 80, which were costly and pleasant.

Richard Grafton, in his *Chronicle of England*, written in 1569, also mentions the food served on the previous two days.

If the French king made good cheere to the king of England, and his trayne at Bulleyn [Boulogne], I assure you he and his traine, were requited at Calice [Calais], for the plentie of wilde foule, Venison, fishe, and all other thinges which were there, it was maruaile to see, for the kinges Officers of England, had made preparation in euery place, so that the Frenchmen were serued, with such multitude of diuers fishes, this Friday and Saterday, that the Maisters of the French kinges housholde, much wondered at the prouision. In likewise on the Sondag, they had all maner of flesh, foule, spice, Venison, both of falow Dere, and red Dere, and as for wine they lacked none, so that well was the Englishe man that might well entertaine the French man: the Lordes of Fraunce neuer fetched their viandes, but they

were sent to them, and often tyme their proporcion of vittaille [victuals] was so abundant, that they refused a great part thereof.

ROYAL WEDDING PLANS

1251: Britain

When the date was set for the marriage of Alexander III of Scotland to Henry III's daughter Margaret on Christmas Day 1251, the plans for the wedding banquet began immediately. Orders were sent to various parts of the kingdom well in advance for the animals which would be needed to prepare the feast. On October 28, 1251, an order went out to the sheriff of Lincoln to purchase 100 hens, 300 partridges, 30 swans, 20 cranes, 25 peacocks, 50 pheasants, 50 rabbits, and 300 hares and to have them delivered to York by three days before Christmas.

PROHIBITION

1919: USA

The National Prohibition Act (the "Volstead Act") passed into law. In the three months before the act was to be enforced on January 17, 1920, it is said that half a million dollars worth of liquor was stolen from government warehouses.

Andrew Volstead said of the Act that he parented, "They can never repeal it." He was wrong, of course, as nothing lasts forever. The "Noble Experiment" (as Hoover called it) of Prohibition lasted 13 years, 10 months, 19 days, 17 hours, 32½ minutes.

It seems clear today with historical hindsight that alcohol consumption did not decrease during the period of prohibition, and many historians consider that it in fact increased.

The public managed to retain its supply of alcohol thanks to sheer human ingenuity. There was widespread disregard for the law, and legal loopholes were found and exploited to the maximum. The restrictions fueled increased corruption on the part of authorities, and organized crime flourished on a scale never seen before, ensuring that plenty of alcohol flowed. The number of drinking establishments probably also increased, restaurants became creative in

the ways they provided alcohol, and home distilleries using a huge variety of fermentable materials became very common. One particularly creative piece of marketing was of a “grape brick” of compressed dried fruit sold with an attached packet of yeast which carried a “warning” that if it was added to the grape juice, “fermentation might result.”

LITERATURE & FOOD

1779: London, England

Sheridan’s play *The Critic* (a revision of an earlier work by another author) was due to open on October 30 at the Royal Theatre in Drury Lane, and the author had still not written the last scene. Naturally, the theater proprietors and actors were anxious. They tricked Sheridan into attending a night rehearsal, and proceeded to lock him in a room with writing materials, two bottles of Claret, and a dish of anchovy sandwiches. He was told that he would be released when he had written the scene. He apparently finished the wine and sandwiches, wrote the scene, and enjoyed the ruse.

From another play by Richard Brinsley Sheridan:

I am never so successful as when I am a little merry: let me throw on a bottle of champagne, and I never lose--at least I never feel my losses, which is exactly the same thing. . . . And then, what man can pretend to be a believer in love, who is an abjurer of wine?

—*School for Scandal*

ANNIVERSARY

1846: France

George-Auguste Escoffier, the man called “the King of Chefs and the Chef of Kings” was born on this day. His book *Le Guide Culinaire*, published in 1903, is still a major reference text for culinary professionals.

When we examine the story of a nation’s eating habits, describing the changing fashions of preparation and presentation and discussing the

development of its cuisine throughout the ages, then we find an outline of the nation's history, harking back to those distant days when a scattered tribe lurked in dismal caves, feeding on raw fish and plants and the hot, quivering flesh of wild beasts, lately slain with a rude spear.

—*La Cuisine Francaise*

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1805: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. On this day Joseph Whitehouse wrote: “[H]alted at an Indian village of about 6 lodges where we Saw an old Brittish musket and Sword, copper tea kittles &c. we bought Several 5 fat dogs, Some root bread &c.”

1861: Australia

From the journals of John McDouall Stuart during his explorations into the inland of the continent.

Mount Hay. Started in the cool of the morning, and in two hours reached where the party were camped. . . . I find that I can no longer sit on horseback; gave orders for some of the party to make a sort of reclining seat, to be carried between two horses, one before the other; also gave orders that a horse was to be shot at sundown, as we are getting rather short of meat, and I hope the change of beef tea made from fresh meat will give me some increase of strength, for I am now reduced to a perfect skeleton, a mere shadow. At sundown had the horse shot; fresh meat to the party is now a great treat. I am denied participating in that pleasure, from the dreadful state in which my mouth still is. I can chew nothing, and all that I have been living on is a little beef tea, and a little boiled flour, which I am obliged to swallow. Tonight I feel very ill, and very, very low indeed.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1670: France

The Marquise de Sévigné wrote one of her many letters to her daughter on this day:

The day before yesterday I took some (chocolate) to digest my dinner, in order to sup well, and yesterday I took some nourishment to hold me until the evening. It produced all the effects I wished. There you have what I find pleasant, it acts as it is supposed to.

1785: France

Thomas Jefferson wrote to James Madison:

Fontainebleau. . . . After descending the hill again I saw a man cutting fern. I went to him under pretence of asking the shortest road to town, and afterwards asked for what use he was cutting fern. He told me that this part of the country furnished a great deal of fruit to Paris. That when packed in straw it acquired an ill taste, but that dry fern preserved it perfectly without communicating any taste at all.

I treasured this observation for the preservation of my apples on my return to my own country. They have no apples here to compare with our Redtown pippin. They have nothing which deserves the name of a peach; there being not sun enough to ripen the plum-peach and the best of their soft peaches being like our autumn peaches. Their cherries and strawberries are fair, but I think lack flavor. Their plums I think are better; so also their gooseberries, and the pears infinitely beyond anything we possess. They have nothing better than our sweet-water; but they have a succession of as good from early in the summer till frost. I am tomorrow to get [to] M. Malsherbes (an uncle of the Chevalier Luzerne's) about seven leagues from hence, who is the most curious man in France as to his trees. He is making for me a collection of the vines from which the Burgundy, Champagne, Bordeaux, Frontignac, and other of the most valuable wines of this country are made. Another gentleman is collecting for me the best eating grapes, including what we call the raisin. I propose also to endeavor to colonize their hare, rabbit, red and grey partridge, pheasants of different kinds, and some other birds. But I find that I am wandering beyond the limits of my walk and will therefore bid you adieu.

1796: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde:

Gathered in my deeping Apples this Morn' but had very few Nonpareils or Pearmains but a good many large Russetts, and seven Bushel-Baskits of the old true Beefans, so peculiar to the County of Norfolk. . . . Dinner to day, rost Breast of Mutton &c. Had one of my little Pigs killed, to have it rosted.

1857: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau:

To Conantum. Those late grapes on Blackberry Steep are now as ripe as ever they will be. They are sweet and shrivelled but on the whole poor. They ripen there the latter part of October.

Going up the cliffy hillside, just north of the witch-hazel, I see a vigorous young apple tree, which, planted by birds or cows, has shot up amid the rocks and woods, and has much fruit on it and more beneath it, uninjured by the frosts, now when all other fruits are gathered. It is of a rank, wild growth, with many green leaves on it still, and makes an impression, at least, of thorniness. The fruit is hard and green, but looks like palatable winter fruit; some dangling on the twigs, but more half buried in the wet leaves, or rolled far down the hill amid the rocks. The owner, Lee, knows nothing of it. There is no hand to pluck its fruit; it is only gnawed by squirrels, I perceive. It has done double duty,—not only borne this crop, but each twig has grown a foot into the air. And this is such a fruit! Bigger than *many* berries, and carried home will be sound and palatable, perchance, next spring. Who knows but this chance wild fruit may be equal to those kinds which the Romans and the English have so prized,—may yet become the favorite of the nations? When I go by this shrub, thus late and hardy, and its dangling fruit strikes me, I respect the tree and am grateful for Nature's bounty.

Even the sourest and crabbedest apple, growing in the most unfavorable position, suggests such thoughts as these, it [is] so noble a fruit. Planted by a bird on a wild and rocky hillside, it bears a fruit, perchance, which foreign potentates shall hear of and send for, though the virtues of the owner of the soil may never be heard of beyond the limits of his village. It may be the choicest fruit of its kind. Every wild apple shrub excites our expectation

thus. It is a prince in disguise, perhaps.

1903

This was the birthday of English writer Evelyn Waugh. He kept a diary most of his life, from the age of seven, and he often noted his birthday celebrations.

1919: *At Lancing College.* Today has been a pleasant enough day but nothing out of the ordinary. . . . A splendid parcel of confectionery arrived from home after lunch on which we sublimely overate ourselves.

1925: My aunts sent me a disgusting tobacco pouch. Some shops sent me bills. It has been a rather dreary day. . . . Richard has gone off to buy hard-boiled eggs for us to eat when this preparation is over. I think I would have been incredulous last year or the year before if I had been told how this birthday was to be spent.

1939: My 36th birthday. . . . A happy day with Laura . . . we lunched heavily and quite well, and sat in a cinema until it was time for her train.

1942: My 39th birthday. A good year. I have begotten a fine daughter, published a successful book, drunk 300 bottles of good wine and smoked 300 or more Havana cigars.

1945: My 42nd birthday. The last three weeks have been happy and uneventful: Laura cooking better, wine lasting out, weather splendid.

1946: My 43rd birthday. . . . The Beefsteak Club reminding me to find seconds for Maurice Bowra and Ran Antrim. . . . We drank a bottle of champagne before dinner, ate haddock for breakfast, pilaf for luncheon

make with a packet of rice Peters gave us, roast chicken for dinner.

OCTOBER 29

A GUN CLUB GAME DINNER

1885: Omaha, Nebraska, USA

The gun club held its annual banquet at the Millard Hotel on this night, and the *Omaha Daily Republican* next day billed the event as “The Most Successful Event of it’s Kind Ever Held in Omaha.” Forty-two members and guests sat down to a menu which consisted of “all the delicacies of the season.”

Blue Points en Couquelle.

Celery.

Consomme, Sportsman Clear—Quenelles

Spanish Olives.

Jack Snipe on Toast.

Breast of Quail Larded—Financiers.

Saratoga Chips.

Roast Goose, Apple Sauce.

Mashed Potatoes.

Canvas back Duck with Jelly.

Mallard Duck with Dressing.

Red Head Duck a la Bourgeoise.

Green Peas.

Cold and Ornamental Dishes.

Teal, Blue-bill and Butter Ball Ducks. En Bellevue.

Champagne Punch.

Prairie Chicken Salad, en Mayonnaise.

Plum Pudding, Brandy Liqueur.

Wine Jelly Roman Punch

Assorted Cakes, Ice Cream

California Grapes, California Pears.

Oranges.

Coffee

FOOD FOR THE POOR

1797: England

In the *Reports of the Society for Bettering the Condition and Increasing the Comforts of the Poor* (1778) is an “Extract from an account of the manner and expence of making stewed ox’s head for the poor, by Mrs Shore of Norton Hall in Derbyshire, dated 29th October 1797.”

One of the members of the society has been very desirous of the particulars of the ox-head stew, which is given away at Norton Hall conceiving that they may be of service. The whole is divided into 52 messes, each mess containing a piece of meat, a piece of fat, and a quart of soup. The distribution of it has been continued since October 1792, once a week, and sometimes oftener, from October to May. The poor people receive it very thankfully, and generally reserve part of the mess for the second day. The manner of preparing it is as follows—Wash the ox’s head very clean and well, and then put into 13 gallons of water; add a peck and a half of pared potatoes, half a quartern of onions, a few carrots, and a handful of pot herbs; thicken it with 2 quarts of oatmeal, and add pepper and salt to your taste :- set it to stew with a gentle fire, early in the afternoon, allowing as

little evaporation as may be, and not skimming off the fat; but leaving the whole to stew gently over the fire, which should be renewed and made up at night. Make a small fire under the boiler at seven o' clock in the morning, and keep adding as much water as will make up the waste by evaporation, keeping it gently stewing till noon, when it will be ready to serve for dinner. The whole is then to be divided into 52 messes; each containing (by a previous division of the meat and fat) a piece of each and a quart of savoury nourishing soup.

The expence of the materials in the northern counties, where it has been tried, may be thus stated :-

- Ox's head 1s-6d
- Potatoes 7.5d
- Onions etc 3.5d
- Total 2s-5d

This amounts, exclusive of fuel and trouble, to rather more than a half-penny for each mess, or about 2 pence a gallon; but in the dearer parts of England, the articles being purchased by retail the mess may cost as much as 3 farthings or a penny.

The beef and other bones, and crusts of bread, of the family may be added to the stew; and will improve the soup, without any additional expence.

Observations.

The above is submitted to the consideration of those house-keepers who have not yet adopted a similar charity, as a cheap and useful mode of relieving their poor neighbours, and of gradually teaching them a better system of diet, than they at present possess. The sum of 2s-5d a week for 7 months (amounting to £3-12s-6d a year) in the cheap parts of England, and a few shillings more in others, is the expence of a charity, which may retain on its lists 52 poor persons, and supply them with the comfort of two meals a week.

This receipt was tried by a gentleman to whom I gave the receipt, in September last, at Auckland workhouse, and was, as I understand extremely liked by the poor. Though the expense was very small, yet the quantity produced being a great deal more than the people of the workhouse could use, the cottagers near the workhouse were desired to send for messes of it; and had, in consequence, the benefit of a plenteous and unexpected meal. It is now inserted in their table of diet, to be made once a week for the benefit of the poor, both in and out of the workhouse. This dish requires more attention, and more conveniences for cookery, than are to be found in a cottage. It would be a good thing if part of every workhouse was converted into a parochial cook's shop, to furnish the poor, who receive no other relief, with cheap and nourishing dishes, which they have neither the men, skill, or inclination to make.

FOOD & WAR

1914: World War I, the Commission for Relief in Belgium

Captain J. F. Lucey was charged with the job of organizing the shipment and distribution of supplies to Belgium. In the early days of the C.R.B the red tape and general confusion were seriously hampering the relief effort.

We are convinced, as stated in our telegram, that we have all underestimated the desperate condition of the Belgian people. For instance, Namur had a population of 40,000 people, and we are authorized by two of the gentlemen from the Belgian committee to state that there are only ten houses left. They advise that these people must have clothes and bedding as well as food. This office will gladly undertake to deliver all these supplies to the Belgian people. . . .

The great and urgent necessity is for flour. If we could get about 25,000 tons of flour, we could relieve the immediate necessities. All of these gentlemen advise me that there is a great danger of revolution, particularly in the vicinity of Liège. The people are so hungry and so desperate that the sight of every German incites them, and in their desperate frame of mind, seeing their children and families without food or clothes, they are liable to attack the German soldiers at any moment, which would mean another terrible and useless sacrifice of the Belgian people. The American

Commission and the American people can avoid this, and I would urge you to resort to any measures to relieve these districts. Could you not obtain a fast cruiser from the American Government to deliver the first cargo of flour?

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1772: South Africa

From the journal of Midshipman John Elliot, sailing with Captain James Cook on his second voyage. He mentions the fat-tailed sheep in Cape Town.

Proceeding very pleasantly on our Voyage, we arrived at the Cape of Good Hope on the 29th of October, 1772, all in uncommon good health and spirits. The Town [Capetown] looks very pretty from the Ships on rising ground, sloping to the Sea, and mostly White, some of the houses in imitation of Marble. It has Canals in the streets, as in Holland, and one of the finest climates in the World, and no better place can be for Ships to stop at, after a long Voyage. Here are abundance of the finest Vegetables from the Dutch Company's gardens, which are very large, laid out with gravel Walks, some of them thirty feet wide, with trees and Myrtle Hedges on each side, clipped. Excellent Water, plenty of fruit, Peaches and Almonds growing in hedgerows in the country. Plenty of good Mutton, some of the Sheep having tails that weigh from Twenty to Twenty-five pounds. The Beef in general is not good. Here are likewise all kind of Naval stores for the use of Ships.

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

The Acacia of Expedition Range was plentiful in the large flat and at the wells of the natives, and formed a fine tree: its seeds, however, were shed, and had been roasted by the late bush fire. Mr. Phillips (who was always desirous of discovering substitutes for coffee, and to whom we owed the use of the river-bean of the Mackenzie) collected these seeds, and pounded and boiled them, and gave me the fluid to taste, which I found so peculiarly

bitter that I cautioned him against drinking it; his natural desire, however, for warm beverage, which had been increased by a whole day's travelling, induced him to swallow about a pint of it, which made him very sick, and produced violent vomiting and purging during the whole afternoon and night. The little I had tasted acted on me as a lenient purgative, but Mr. Calvert, who had taken rather more than I did, felt very sick. The gum of this Acacia was slightly acid, and very harmless.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1663: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys. This day's entry provides a good snapshot of seventeenth century dining, and an early mention of a printed bill-of-fare.

Up, it being *Lord Mayors Day*, Sir Anthony Bateman. This morning was brought up my new velvet cloak. . . . I had it this day brought home, thinking to have worn it to dinner, but I thought it would be better to go without it because of the Crowde, and so did not wear it. . . . At noon I went forth, and by coach to Guild Hall . . . we went up and down to see the tables' where under every salt there was a Bill of Fare and at the end of the table the persons proper for that table. Many were the tables, but none in the Hall but the Mayours and the Lords of the privy Councell that had napkins or knives, which was very strange. We went to the Buttry and there stayed and talked, and them in to the hall again; and there wine was offered and tey drunk, I only drinking some Hypocras, which doth not break my vowe, it being, to the best for my present judgement, only a mixed compound drink, and not any wine. . . . By and by, about one a-clock, before the Lord Mayor came, came into the hall, from the room where they were first led into , the Lord Chancellor (Archbishop before him), with the Lords of the Council and other Bishoppes, and they to dinner. Anon comes the Lord Mayor, who went up to the Lords and then to the other tables to bid them wellcome; and so all to dinner. I set near Proby, Baron, and Creed at the Merchant Strangers table—where ten good dishes to a messe, with plenty of wine of all sorts, of which I drunk none; but it was very displeasing that we had no napkins nor change of trenchers, and drunk out of earthen pitchers and wooden dishes.

1851: USA

From the notebooks of Nathaniel Hawthorne:

On a walk to Scott's pond, with Ellery Channing, we found a wild strawberry in the woods, not quite ripe, but beginning to redden. For a week or two, the cider-mills have been grinding apples. Immense heaps of apples lie piled near them, and the creaking of the press is heard as the horse treads on. Farmers are repairing cider-barrels; and the wayside brook is made to pour itself into the bunghole of a barrel, in order to cleanse it for the new cider.

1855: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau:

There is a wild apple on the hill which has to me a peculiarly pleasant bitter tang, not perceived till it is three quarters tasted. It remains on the tongue. As you cut it, it smells exactly like a squash-bug. I like its very acerbity. It is a sort of triumph to eat and like it, an ovation. In the fields alone are the sours and bitters of nature appreciated; just as the woodchopper eats his meal in a sunny glade in middle of a winter day, with contentment, in a degree of cold which, experienced in the house, would make the student miserable,—basks in a sunny ray and dreams of summer, in a degree of cold which, felt in a chamber, would make a student wretched. They who are abroad at work are not cold; it is they who sit shivering in houses. As with cold and heat, so with sweet and sour. This natural raciness, sours and bitters, etc., which the diseased palate refuses, are the true casters and condiments. What is sour in the house a bracing walk makes sweet. Let your condiments be in the condition of your senses. Apples which the farmer neglects and leaves out as unsalable, and unpalatable to those who frequent the markets, are choicest fruit to the walker.

OCTOBER 30

DINNER TO THE AMERICAN FLEET

1908: Amoy, China

A dinner was given on this day by the Chinese government to the American Fleet. The menu was printed on a fan.

Bird's Nest Soup.

Shark's Fins and Crab Roe.

Rolled Fish.

Fried Oysters.

Mushrooms and Bamboo Shoots.

Shrimp Balls.

Fried Duck's Liver and Giblets.

Boiled Ham and Chicken.

Devilled Crabs on Shell.

Minced Chicken and Cauliflower.

Li Hung Chang Chop Sui.

Tea. Fruits. Cakes.

BONNIE PRINCE CHARLIE

1745

The household books of Prince Charles Edward Stuart, the Pretender to the English throne, popularly known as "Bonnie Prince Charlie," show the expenditure on various basic supplies at Hollyrood House.

Octbr. Y^e 30 at ye abbay of Holyroodhouse, Wednesday

46 pd bife at 2d2f

0 9 7

to 4 quarters mutton	0 7 0
to Doz hens	0 10 0
to 2 Doz Chickens	0 9 0
To 16 pd butter	0 10 8
To a whit Irne Spicerie Box	0 6 0
To 2 padelocks	0 1 10
	£2 15 0
At Pinky Houss in the march to England, Thursday	
to bread and alle	0 12 0
to onions and greens	0 0 10
To 2 Doz peers	0 0 6
To a woman in y ^e Citchen	0 0 0
	£0 14 4

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1807: Britain

Henry Thompson, of Tottenham, Middlesex, received the first British patent for “an invention which consists in the impregnating of Cheltenham or other natural medicinal waters, or such as are usually denominated ‘Mineral Waters’ with one or more of the different gases or aëriform fluids, and in adding other substances to, or combining the same with, such waters.”

FOOD FIRSTS

1676: Boston, Massachusetts, USA

The first coffee house license in Boston was approved.

Vpon the motion of seuerall Merchants & Gentlemen of this towne that some person may be allowed to sell Coffee, John Sparry is aproued of by the select men to keepe a publique house for sellenge of Coffee, if y e honored Countie Court shall be pleased to admit him.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1818: Australia

From John Oxley’s journal of his expedition in 1818 to explore the Macquarie River region:

[O]n the beach southwest of the Sugarloaf Point. . . This beach was a peculiarly productive one to us; a great number of fine fish resembling salmon, had been pursued through the surf by larger fish, and were left dry by the retiring tide: we picked up thirty-six, and a welcome prize they proved to us.

1820: Canada

Sir George Back, British explorer and veteran of arctic expeditions with Sir John Franklin wrote about nemmican on this day:

Franklin, wrote about penicillin on this day.

On the 30th[October] we set out with the expectation of gaining the Great Slave Lake in the evening but our progress but the whole day was spent forcing our way through thick woods and and over swamps covered in snow. . . . When it became dark we halted near Bow String Portage. The Indians expected to have found here a bear in its den, and to have made a hearty meal of its flesh; indeed it had been the subject of conversation all day, and they had even gone so far as to divide it, frequently asking me which part I preferred. Alas, it had already fallen prey to more fortunate hunters, who had only left evidence that such a thing had once existed. One of our men, however, caught a fish and with the assistance of some tripe de roche scraped from the rocks, made us a tolerable supper. While we were eating I perceived one of the women busily employed scraping an old skin, the contents of which her husband presented us with. They consisted of pounded meat, fat, and a greater proportion of Indians` and deer hair than either. It was thought a great luxury after three days privation in these cheerless regions. If it had not been for the precaution and the generosity of the Indians, we must have gone without sustenance until we reached the fort.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1663: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

Lay long in bed with my wife, and then up and a while at my office, and so to the Change, and so [home] again, and there I found my wife in a great passion with her mayds. I upstairs to set some things in order in our chamber and wardrobe, and so to dinner upon a good dish of stewed beef, then up again about my business.

1709: America

From the diary of William Byrd of Westover, Virginia:

I waited on the President to church where Mr. Goodwin preached a good sermon. After church I went to Mr. Blair's to dinner with all the Council in

attendance. I ate boiled beef for dinner. About 5 o'clock we returned home and then went to the coffeehouse where we sat an hour and then went home. I neglected to say my prayers, for which God forgive me. I had good health, good thoughts, and good humor, thanks be to Almighty God.

OCTOBER 31

HALLOWE'EN

All Hallows Eve, or Hallowe'en, is the eve of All Hallows (All Saints) Day according to the Christian calendar. The "modern" folk traditions of Hallowe'en however, are a synthesis of ancient, Druidic, Celtic, and Roman ideas and rituals. Many traditions invoke the ancient Celtic celebration of Samhain, which marked the end of the harvest season. It was believed that on this night, the passage between the worlds of the living and the dead were open, and the souls of the dead returned to walk the earth to be honored by loved ones—or to wreak havoc if not properly appeased.

As with so many ancient festivals, it was a time for divination, and in Ireland it was customary in some regions to place a ring in sweet bread dough, and the girl who got the piece of bread with the ring would be assured of finding a husband within the year. The bread was called Barm Brack—from *barm* meaning yeast and *breac* meaning speckled (referring to the dried fruit in the dough.) The same type of cake was a staple in other strongly Celtic regions: in Wales it is Bara Brith, and in Scotland it is Bannock.

Harvest fruit and vegetables feature very large at Hallowe'en. Pumpkins, of course, are essential for carving if not for eating, and many of the games involve apples in some form or another, such as "bobbing" or ducking. Apples are also an important base for beverages: in olden times, Lamb's Wool (see November 9) was made and used to "wassail" the orchard trees to encourage a good harvest.

To Make Barren [Barm] Brack

Take three quarts of flour, rub into it three ounces of butter, seven ounces of sugar, some caraway seeds, make a hole in this; put into it two eggs beat up to a froth, a gill of barm in as much new milk as will wet it; work it up and let it rise, and bake it upon a girdle.

—*The New Practice of Cookery, Pastry, Baking, and Preserving: being The Country Housewife's Best Friend* (Edinburgh, 1804), by Mrs Hudson, Mrs Donat

A HALLOWE'EN SUPPER

1917: Lake Placid, New York

One of its founders of the Lake Placid Club (a health resort) was Melville Dewey, the inventor of the library classification system that bears his name, and the Spelling Reform Association. Many of the menus from the club were written in the "Simpler Speling" style, such as the one below:

This is the nicht o' Hallowe'en

When a' the witchy nicht be seen

Lake Placid Club Simpler speling

Forest Hall

Supper

6.30-7.30

Cream of tomato

-

Homini Post tosties

Picalilli Pikld pears

-

Broiled blufish

Boild finan hadie cream saus

-

Broild sirloin steak

or Turki cutlets with peas

or Devild ham on toast

Creamed poacht eggs

-

Egs to order

Baked potatos Au gratin potatos

Baked Hubbard squaf au gratin

-

COLD

Ham *or* Lam *or* Veal

Letis Strij bean salad

-

TOST

Dry Buterd Milk

Whole wheat rols Tea biskits wit huni

Pumpkin py Ginjerbred whipt cream

Maple sugar cake

Cotaj cheex with wafers

-

Tea Cofi Coco Butermilk Milk

Extra charj for all ordes not on menu

DINNER FOR THE WORKERS

1913: London, England

King George V held a dinner for the five hundred workmen who had renovated the exterior of Buckingham Palace in only thirteen weeks. The dinner was held at the King's Hall Holborn Restaurant, and the menu was "Scotch Broth, Boiled Turbot with Hollandaise Sauce, Roast Saddle of Mutton, Roast Beef, baked potatoes, Brussels sprouts and Cauliflower; followed by Saxon pudding and dessert." The meal was accompanied by "an abundant supply of good ale."

FOOD & THE LAW

1920: USA

Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes handed down the decision of the Supreme Court which upheld trademark violations for the Coca-Cola Company against the Koke Company of America.

The Koke Company had claimed that the Coca-Cola Company was guilty of false advertising as it contained neither cocaine nor cola nuts, and that it had thereby lost any right to protection under the law.

Justice Holmes agreed that the word "Koke" was an abbreviation for Coca-Cola, and that Coca-Cola was "a single thing from a single source, and well known to the community."

FOOD & WAR

1917: Israel, World War I

The horsemen of the Australian Desert Mounted Corps defeated the Turkish forces at Beersheba on this day, preparing the way for the capture of Jerusalem. The men had carried only three days' rations, each of which at that time consisted, in theory, of: 1 lb. of bread or 14 oz. of biscuits per day, 12 oz. fresh meat or 9 oz. bully beef, 3 oz. jam or treacle, half an oz. tea, 1/8th of an oz. milk,

3 oz. sugar, 4 oz. potatoes, 4 oz. other vegetables, 3 oz. bacon, 1/36th oz. pepper; also 4 oz. oatmeal or rice per week and 4 oz. flour twice a week. The daily ration for the horses (also in theory) was 10 lbs. of barley bran and scrap hail (a mixture of molasses and millers' waste), and 12 lbs. of tibbin.

In reality, often neither the men nor the horses in action got their full ration. The tobacco ration was also often nonexistent, resulting in some soldiers smoking their tea leaves. Rations were supplemented at times by supplies captured from the enemy, such as canned foods, raisins, rice, grain, and tibbin.

Tibbin is hay or chopped straw; the word comes from the Arabic word for this —*tibn*.

Scrap hail was a mixture of miller's waste and molasses.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1709: America

From the diary of William Byrd of Westover, Virginia:

We sat in court till about 4 o'clock and then I rode to Green Springs to meet my wife. I found her there and had the pleasure to learn that all was well at home, thanks be to God. There was likewise Mrs. Chiswell. I ate boiled beef for supper. Then we danced and were merry till about 10 o'clock. I neglected to say my prayers but had good health, good thoughts, and good humor, thanks be to God almighty.

1757: England

From the diary of Thomas Turner, a schoolteacher turned shopkeeper in a Sussex village: "In the morn, Fielder brought our herrings, but could get no pandles; I paid him for 1100 herrings, 33s."

Pandles is an old Sussex word for shrimp.

1762: England

From the diary of Thomas Turner: “*Sunday*. No service at our church in the morning or afternoon. I dined on roast goose and apple sauce; I drank tea with Mr. Carman and his family. This is not the right use that Sunday should be applied to. No, it is not.”

1849: At Sea

From the *Memorandum* of Elizabeth Millar Purdie, wife of the ship’s surgeon, on the voyage of the Mooltan from Greenock, Scotland, to Port Chalmers, Otago, New Zealand:

Two degrees south of Capricorn—for three days have we a heavy head swell, our vessel has rolled and pitched a great deal. . . . There are also some suffering from sea-sickness but otherwise we may be reported well. There is a good deal of preserved meat on board, we have at table preserved potatoes and carrots—sometimes a nice cut of salmon—or roast beef—also preserved plums, currants for Tarts—bread is baked by the Steward every morning. The Steerage passengers bake a great deal—they save their flour and make scones and puddings. Some of them brought a lot of nice things with them. When I was so ill that I could not taste anything within our reach—a kind person (Mrs Duncan) brought me some eggs—preserved in salt my husband immediately gave one to our cook to make a pancake it was the first thing I ate before that I was supported by Wine and Brandy—another of the passengers brought me some scones of her own baking.

November

NOVEMBER 1

FOOD & WAR

1939: Britain, World War II

The *Daily Express Wartime Cookery Book* was published in Great Britain, well ahead of the rationing system it was intended to support (see January 8.) Here are a couple of recipes from the book.

Sago Mould

Sprinkle 2oz. of sago into a pint of boiling half-and-half milk and water. Add 1oz sugar. Cook thoroughly until stiff. Add two tablespoons of golden syrup and the grated rind and juice of 1 lemon. Pour into a wetted mould and leave to set.

Boiled Calf's Head

Wash the head well, remove the tongue and brains. Place in a pan of boiling water, making sure the head is covered. Bring to the boil and remove any scum. Boil for 3 hours. After 2 hours put the tongue and brains into the pan.

Serve with parsley sauce and the tongue and brains cut into small pieces.

1941: France, World War II

The Vichy government became the first wartime government to ration wine. Wine ration cards were issued on this day in the Allier department surrounding Vichy.

1948: South Africa, Post-World War II

This was "White Bread Day," the much longed-for day when the unpopular

brown wartime Victory Loaf was no longer the only bread allowed to be sold.

AN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE

1990

The McDonald's Corporation responded to increasing consumer concern and announced that polystyrene foam containers would be replaced with wrapping that was more environmentally friendly. Polystyrene foam is not bio-degradable, and the massive quantities used around the world in fast food containers has created a huge environmental problem. Many regional authorities have banned their use, including those in San Francisco and Portland Oregon. There is concern and controversy also about the potential for health risks due to styrene leaching into food stored or heated in the containers.

FOOD & MOVIES

1989: France

The Peter Greenaway movie *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife and Her Lover* opened on this night. The movie created a lot of controversy on its release. Its style is challenging and its subject matter unpleasant: it is about violence, sex, lust, rage, murder, and revenge . It takes place in an elegant restaurant owned by a nasty, oafish thief whose beautiful wife has a brief passionate encounter with a gentle writer in between the courses of the meal. Visually, the film is full of highly graphic and disturbing images involving food, hence its reputation for being one of the great 'foodie' movies of all time.

CHOCOLATE

1677: Brazil

A Royal Decree was signed by King Pedro II in Lisbon on this day which ordered the governors of Maranhao and Pará in Brazil, to establish cacao plantations in the northeast of the country. Brazil ultimately became one of the most important cacao producers in the world.

COFFEE

1696: New York

What is generally believed to be the first coffee house in New York City opened on this day. The licensee was John Hutchin, and he built his premises, *The King's Arms*, on a plot of land on Broadway, near Trinity Church. It is said that the yellow brick which clad the front of the building was shipped from Holland, and that the upper story included an 'observatory' which commanded a fine view of the river and the city. The essential difference between a tavern and a coffee house was that the latter encouraged customers to carry out their daily meetings and transact business there. This followed the English model. Many of England's large commercial institutions developed out of coffee house meetings—such as Lloyd's of London, for example.

MRS. BEETON

1859: England

Isabella Beeton's famous *Book of Household Management* was initially released in installments, in the *Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine* produced by her husband's publishing company. *The Times* newspaper announced on October 28, that Part 1 was to be published on 1 November 1859. The complete *Book of Household Management* was published in 1861, and it was an enormous success, selling over 60,000 copies in the first year. It was a monumental work covering not only recipes, but advice on managing servants, rearing children, and even financial and legal issues, as well as snippets of information on history, agriculture, religion and many other topics as they touched upon the running of a household. It became the domestic bible for several generations of Victorian middle-class housewives.

Isabella Beeton was not, of course, a cook herself. A housewife of her status was expected to be able to supervise and manage a cook and other household staff, but not to involve herself in the actual preparation of meals. Isabella claimed only to be the editor of the book, but the wonder is that she managed such a massive volume of material without the modern advantages of computers, as a young wife with no career experience. The only recipe in the book to which she laid claim is the following one for a soup for the poor—the assistance of the

local poor being an important the responsibility of a well-off housewife of the time.

Useful Soup for Benevolent Purposes

Ingredients. An ox-cheek, any pieces of trimmings of beef, which may be bought very cheaply (say 4 lbs.), a few bones, any pot-liquor the larder may furnish, 1/4 peck of onions, 6 leeks, a large bunch of herbs, 1/2 lb. of celery (the outside pieces, or green tops, do very well); 1/2 lb. of carrots, 1/2 lb. of turnips, 1/2 lb. of coarse brown sugar, 1/2 a pint of beer, 4 lbs. of common rice, or pearl barley; 1/2 lb. of salt, 1 oz. of black pepper, a few raspings, 10 gallons of water.

Mode. Cut up the meat in small pieces, break the bones, put them in a copper, with the 10 gallons of water, and stew for 1/2 an hour. Cut up the vegetables, put them in with the sugar and beer, and boil for 4 hours. Two hours before the soup is wanted, add the rice and raspings, and keep stirring till it is well mixed in the soup, which simmer gently. If the liquor reduces too much, fill up with water.

Time. 6 1/2 hours. Average cost, 1 1/2 d. per quart.

Note. The above recipe was used in the winter of 1858 by the Editress, who made, each week, in her copper, 8 or 9 gallons of this soup, for distribution amongst about a dozen families of the village near which she lives. The cost, as will be seen, was not great; but she has reason to believe that the soup was very much liked, and gave to the members of those families, a dish of warm, comforting food, in place of the cold meat and piece of bread which form, with too many cottagers, their usual meal, when, with a little more knowledge of the "cooking" art, they might have, for less expense, a warm dish, every day.

COLONIAL HISTORY

1789: Australia

The first few years in the new colony became known as "the starvation years." Crops and herds were not well-established, and the populace were still reliant on the remaining supplies brought from England, and what could be supplemented by hunting and fishing. On this day, the already short rations were further

by hunting and fishing. On this day, the already short rations were further reduced to two-thirds for “every Man, from the Governor to the Convict.” The ration for women did not change, as many were pregnant, nursing, or caring for children.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1824: Australia

Hamilton Hume and William Hovell were commissioned to undertake an expedition to explore the area south-west of the Murrumbidgee River.

Hovell’s diary entry on this day reads:

Throughout the day, it was very warm, the thermometer at sunrise reading 50deg. and at noon, 89deg. in the tent. As the feed is so very good, and the cattle so much fatigued from the last three days’ journey, we made Sunday off to-day, in the place of yesterday, and prepared for tomorrow’s journey. Killed one very large kangaroo, and caught a lobster out of the river. I cannot perceive any difference between it and the lobsters in England. Sowed some clover seed and four peach stones. I should have observed in its proper place that, to the best of my belief, I have had some put into the ground in every place we have stopped at, commencing at Murrumbidgee River on the 19th ultimo.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1603: Yorkshire, England

Lady Margaret Hoby, a devout upper-class woman, kept a diary primarily to aid her spiritual growth, but occasionally she included a note about some household or other matter, such as her entry on this day in which she refers to the raspberries in the garden, which are undergoing a second setting apparently due to the unseasonably warm weather.

At this time we had in our gardens Rasberes faire sett againe

1639: England

Lady Brilliana Harley, at home in Brampton Bryan in Herefordshire, wrote regularly to her son, Edward while he was away at Oxford. She also frequently sent gifts of food: “I have sent you by this carrier a loyne of veale backed [baked], if the cooke have doun his part it is well.”

1661: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

I went this morning with Sir W. Pen by coach to Westminster, and having done my business at Mr. Montagu’s, I went back to him at Whitehall, and from thence with him to the 3 Tun Tavern, at Charing Cross, and there sent for up the maister of the house’s dinner, and dined very well upon it.

1663: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys: “*Lord’s Day*. Up and to church with my wife; and at noon dined at home alone—a good calf’s head boiled and dumplings, an excellent dinner methought it was.”

1666: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

Up, and was presented by Burton, one of our smith’s wives, with a very noble cake, which I presently resolved to have my wife go with to-day, and some wine, and house-warme my Betty Michell, which she readily resolved to do.

1711: America

From the diary of William Byrd of Westover, Virginia:

We sent some ducks and pigeons to the Governor. . . . I drank chocolate for breakfast and about 10 o’clock went to court but the Governor was not there. I sat till about 3 o’clock and then went to my lodgings where I wrote in my journal till 4 o’clock, and then went to the Governor’s to dinner and found my wife there. I ate venison pasty for dinner.

1872: London, England

William Allingham was an Irish poet, diarist and customs officer, and a friend of Dante Gabriel Rossetti. He wrote in his diary on this day:

Dined at Mr. John Forster's, Palace Gate House, Kensington. Mr. and Mrs. Foster, Carlyle and Mary Aitken, Edward Emerson (son of R.W.E.) and myself. . . . C.'s description of a charge at Waterloo got from some eye-witness: two red lines advancing, one fixed—of dead and wounded. I told the account of the battle given me by Tom Patten, an old soldier at Ballyshannon, which amounted to this—he was “a'most smothered with smoke, and mortal hungry (nothing to eat all day)”; when the French ran away he prowled about for something to put between his teeth, and by good luck found a live goose squatting in a corner; three or four men came up and would have taken it off him, but he defended the goose at the point of the bayonet, and they agreed that it should be cooked and shared; so they plucked it, made a little fire, and “ait” it half raw. . . . C. laughed, and agreed we were apt to forget that hunger and thirst are often among the trials of a battlefield.

NOVEMBER 2

DAY OF THE DEAD

This is All Soul's Day according to the Christian calendar, or in Mexico it is the *Día de los Muertos* (Day of the Dead.) The folk traditions of the day have their roots in ancient Aztec practices, with Christian symbolism being grafted onto these by the conquering Spanish. European Christian nations intent on broadening their empires knew that to try to abolish traditional spiritual practices would work against their own missionary intentions, so they gradually substituted and added Christian symbolism to the ancient concepts and festival days. This is true of Christmas and Easter and all other major festival days—the roots of the traditions and rituals we pursue today have their roots in pre-Christian spiritual practices.

In Mexico, the color and scent of marigolds—“the flowers of death”—are everywhere. The strong smell supposedly guides the dead souls back to their earthly homes where they can join in the three days of celebratory fun. Marigolds are not incorporated in the food—although they may decorate the

marigolds are not incorporated in the food—although they may decorate the bread—but the flowers are certainly edible, and were once very popular in Europe for culinary as well as medicinal purposes. Other foods enjoyed on this day in Mexico are sugar sweets made in the form of skulls and bones, and pumpkin candy.

In some part of England, it used to be the tradition to make special breads called Soulmass loaves (Sau'mass or Solmas-Loaves). Some were made specifically to keep until the following year (a similar tradition existed for Easter hot-cross buns) in the belief that they would ward off evil. A mid-nineteenth century glossary of words used in the North of England describes them:

Soulmass Loaves, soul mass bread, . . . eaten on the feast of All Souls, November 2d. They were sets of square farthing cakes with currants in the centre, commonly given by bakers to their customers, and it was usual to keep them in the house for good luck. Dr. Young, in his *History of Whitby*, mentions a lady as having one above a hundred years old.

FISH HARVEST FESTIVAL

London

An ancient tradition established by the Fishmongers' Company (which was established 1272) called the Fish Harvest Festival is still practiced at the church of St Dunstan's-in-the-East in Lower Thames Street. Thirty-nine different types of fish representing the thirty-nine articles of faith, are brought to the church to be blessed on the Sunday nearest to All Soul's Day.

DINNER AT DELMONICO'S

1899: USA

The New York Chamber of Commerce held a reception at Delmonico's—the famous New York fine dining venue—in honor of Senor Ignacio M. Mariscal, the secretary of foreign affairs of Mexico, and Senor Jose Ives Limantour, the minister of finance of Mexico. The menu was printed by Tiffany and Co. The dishes listed show that this was a rather informal luncheon or collation, as would be expected at a reception rather than a formal dinner. Apart from the soup the dishes were all served cold, perhaps buffet-style.

CHAUD

Consommé de Volaille

Café

FROID

Saumon á la Bayadere

Filet de Boeuf aux Croustades Macedoine

Galantine de Perdreaux á la Clémentine

Aspics de Foies-Gras Decoré

Pluviers et Becassines au Cresson

Chaud-Froid de Poulet Reine á la Gelée

Salade de Homard

Mayonnaise do Volaille

Sandwiches Assortis

Petits Pains de Rillettes

ENTREMETS DE DOUCEUR

Gateaux Noisettes Charlotte Russe

Glaces de Fantaisies Soufflé aux Marrons

Biscuits Diplomate Tutti-frutti

Petits Fours Fruits.

One of the classic cold dishes is a *chaud-froid* (literally a “warm-cold”). To make a chaud-froid, a warm béchamel-based sauce is poured carefully over the cold meat or fish. The sauce can be flavoured or tinted (green and pink were

popular) and as it cools, it forms an attractive glossy coating. The following instructions for a chaud-froid sauce are taken from *The Book of Sauces* (Chicago, 1915) by Charles Senn.

Chaufroid Sauce, White

½ pint béchamel or supreme sauce, 1 gill aspic, 5 or 6 leaves French gelatine, 1 gill cream, 1 teaspoonful chili vinegar or lemon juice.

Dissolve the gelatine along with the aspic jelly, warm up the sauce, and mix the two together. Stir over the fire until it boils, put in vinegar or lemon-juice, and cook for a few minutes. Strain or tammy; add the cream when cooling and use as required.

Chaufroid Sauce, Green or Pink

Prepare a white chaud-froid sauce, to which add a few drops of spinach greening to give it a green tint, or a few drops of liquid carmine or cochineal to give it a rose or pink tint.

VEGAN NEWS

1944

The word *vegan* was coined and used for the first time in print. D. Watson in the *Vegan News* of this date said:

“Vegetarian” and “Fruitarian” are already associated with societies that allow the ‘fruits’ of cows and fowls, therefore . . . we must make a new and appropriate word. . . . I have used the title “The Vegan News”. Should we adopt this, our diet will soon become known as the vegan diet, and we should aspire to the rank of vegans .

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1663: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

[A]nd so to dinner, and after a good dinner left Mrs. Hunt and my wife making marmalade of quinces . . . my wife and I took Mrs. Hunt at almost 9 at night by coach and carried Mrs. Hunt home, and did give her a box of sugar and a haunch of venison given me by my Lady the other day.

1666: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

Up betimes, and with Sir W. Batten to Woolwich. . . . He, and I also did buy some apples and pork; by the same token, the Butcher commended it as the best in England for Cloath and Colour—and for his beef, says he, “Look how fat it is; the lean appears only here and there a speck, like beauty spots.”

The interesting thing about this entry is that it highlights the difference in attitude to fat on meat between Pepys’ time and today. In his time, visible fat in meat was desirable, today the reverse is true, yet obesity was uncommon in Pepys’ time. In his time too, of course, very little sugar was consumed as it was expensive, and everyone was more active on a day to day basis—Pepys mostly walked between his home and office and his friends’ homes, as his diary entries indicate. Some medical experts today are starting to argue that it may be the high sugar and low activity levels of a modern lifestyle that are the culprits in heart and weight problems—not fat. It is also true however, that in spite of our supposedly terrible modern diet, our life expectancy far exceeds that in the seventeenth century.

1709: America

From the diary of William Byrd of Westover, Virginia:

I rose at 6 o’clock and read a chapter in Hebrew and some Greek in Lucian. I said my prayers and ate milk for breakfast, and settled some accounts, and then went to court where we made an end of the business. We went to dinner about 4 o’clock and I ate boiled beef again. In the evening I went to Dr. Barret’s where my wife came this afternoon.

1711: America

From the diary of William Byrd of Westover, Virginia:

I rose about 7 o'clock and read nothing because my wife was there, nor did I say my prayers, but ate boiled milk for breakfast. About 10 o'clock I went to the capitol and sat all day in court without once going away and by night we made an end. Then I waited on the Governor home to dinner where we found Mrs. Churchill and several other ladies and my wife among them. The table was so full that the doctor and Mrs. Graeme and I had a little table to ourselves and were more merry than the rest of the company. I ate roast beef for supper.

NOVEMBER 3

SAINT HUBERT'S DAY

St. Hubert of Liege is the patron saint of Belgium and of the hunt, and especially of hunting dogs. The hunting season opens in many places on this day, and in many parts of France and Belgium the day begins with a stag hunt. Before the hunt, special bread is made and blessed and then shared with the hunting dogs in the belief and hope that this will protect them from rabies. Dishes styled 'à la St Hubert' are all based on game of some sort, whether in the form of consommé, purée, tournedos, vol-au-vents, timbales or omelet.

DINNER IN A COPPER

1804: London

The *London Gazette* reported on a dinner which took place in a most unusual venue on this day:

A copper of most astonishing magnitude has recently been made for Messrs. Stratton and Smith, ale-brewers near Carnaby Market. And as a description of it may not be uninteresting to our readers, we shall give it in the words with which our correspondent has favoured us. It is 34 feet high, and 96 in diameter, and being made in the outskirts of the town, it took 18 horses to draw it to its destination. It was brought home and fixed on Thursday se'ennight, [i.e. Thursday last week, which was November 3] and Messrs. Stratton and Smith invited all their customers to dine with them in

this copper. Accordingly tables and benches, in an amphitheatrical style, were fixed in the copper, and 769 persons sat down in it at once to dinner. They were treated with the following fare:

- Two buttocks of beef, weighing each 8 ½ lbs,
- Nine dozen of roasted and boiled ducks
- Twenty-two tongues,
- Eleven dozen of roasted and boiled fowls,
- Seventeen hams
- Five dozen fat geese, roasted and boiled,
- One hundred and thirty-six dozen of wine of all sorts
- Twelve barrels of famous ale, and porter *galore*.

In the mash tub adjoining the copper (also newly made and of large magnitude), were all their draymen, 304 in number, who fared equally sumptuously.

RAILWAY FOOD

1842: USA

The first meal served aboard a train is believed to have taken place on this day. The occasion was the completion of a new stretch of rail between Hancock and Cumberland, Maryland. The guests were the president and firectors of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, and a few other lucky gentlemen invited along for the 178 mile ride out of Baltimore.

The event was reported a few days later in the *Baltimore American*:

As it was not designed to stop on up the road, an elegant cold collation was prepared in one of the cars, fitted up for the purpose, under the direction of Mr. Barnum of City Hotel, whose skill in such matters is too well known to need commendation. The attention of the company was equally divided

between the excellence of the rare and the novelty of thirty or forty gentlemen comfortably enjoying a collation while traveling at the rapid rate of twenty-five or thirty miles per hour.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1863: USA

J. T. Alden, of Cincinnati, Ohio, was granted Patent No. 40,451 for "Improvement in the Preparation of Yeast." His method was to produce a new form of dry yeast. Previous methods of preparing dried yeast required a thick dry cake to be manually ground or crushed, but according to the patentee, this mechanical action and pressure damaged the yeast, making it less effective. The new method produced yeast in fine threads or granules which kept well and were easily dissolved for use.

WINE & WAR

1916: Baltic Sea, World War I

A Swedish schooner attempting to defy a blockade was sunk in the Baltic sea off the coast of Finland by a German submarine. There were 60 tons of wine and spirits aboard, intended for Tsar Nicholas' Imperial Army.

In 1998 the wreck and its cargo of Heidsieck & C^o Monopole, Goût Américain, Vintage 1907 were salvaged. Amazingly, the wine was found to be in excellent condition. The lack of light and the cold (2-4° C) had created perfect conditions for storage, and the water pressure had kept the cork in the bottles.

FOOD FIRSTS

1952: USA

Frozen bread was offered for sale for the first time, by Arnold Bakers of Port Chester, New York. Test-marketing was subsequently instituted in Florida, South Carolina, Tennessee, and other southern locations. In the first six months Arnold sold more than a million loaves. The bread was made in the regular way, and frozen within three hours of baking, with some stores selling it in the frozen

state and others thawing before putting it on the shelves. Arnold hoped that cheaper bread would result, as the waste of stale and therefore unsellable bread would be reduced.

FOOD & THE LAW

1966: USA

The Fair Packaging and Labeling Act became effective. It was the first “truth in packaging law.” The purpose of the Act was: “To regulate interstate and foreign commerce by preventing the use of unfair or deceptive methods of packaging or labeling of certain consumer commodities distributed in such commerce, and for other purposes.”

The law requires the label to state the identity of the product, the name and place of business of the manufacturer, packer, or distributor, and the net quantity of contents (in both metric and imperial units.)

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1840: Australia

From the journal of Edward John Eyre (1815-1901) on an expedition into the inland of Central Australia:

After seeing the party ready to move on, I left Mr. Scott to conduct the dray, whilst I rode forward in advance to the depot near Streaky Bay, where I arrived early in the afternoon, and was delighted to find the party all well, and everything going on prosperously . . . Around the camp were immense piles of oyster shells, pretty plainly indicating the feasting my men had enjoyed during my absence, whilst their strong and healthy appearance shewed how well such fare had agreed with them. The oysters were procured from the most southerly bight of Streaky Bay, on some mud banks about two or three hundred yards below low water mark, where they are found in immense numbers and of different sizes. The flavour of these oysters was excellent, and the smaller ones were of great delicacy. The men were in the habit of taking a cart down to the beach frequently, where, by wading up to their knees in the sea at low water, they were enabled to fill it. This supply lasted for two or three days.

Many drays might easily be loaded, one after the other, from these oyster beds. The natives of the district do not appear to eat them, for I never could find a single shell at any of their encampments. It is difficult to account for the taste or prejudice of the native, which guides him in his selection or rejection of particular kinds of food. What is eaten readily by the natives in one part of Australia is left untouched by them in another, thus the oyster is eaten at Sydney, and I believe King George's Sound, but not at Streaky Bay. The unio or freshwater muscle is eaten in great numbers by all the natives of New South Wales and South Australia; but Captain Grey found that a Perth native, who accompanied him on one of his expeditions, would not touch this kind of food even when almost starving. Snakes are eaten by some tribes, but not by others; and so with many other kinds of food which they make use of.

1844: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

It had now become painfully evident to me that I had been too sanguine in my calculations, as to our finding a sufficiency of game to furnish my party with animal food, and that the want of it was impairing our strength. We had also been compelled to use our flour to a greater extent than I wished; and I saw clearly that my party, which I had reluctantly increased on my arrival at Moreton Bay, was too large for our provisions. I, therefore, communicated to my companions the absolute necessity of reducing our number: all, however, appeared equally desirous to continue the journey; and it was, therefore, but just that those who had joined last, should leave. Mr. Gilbert, however, who would, under this arrangement, have had to retire, found a substitute in Mr. Hodgson, who had perhaps suffered most by additional fatigues; so that he and Caleb, the American negro, prepared for their return to Moreton Bay. Previous, however, to their departure, they assisted in killing one of our steers, the meat of which we cut into thin slices, and dried in the sun. This, our first experiment--on the favourable result of which the success of our expedition entirely depended—kept us, during the process, in a state of great excitement. It succeeded, however, to our great joy, and inspired us with confidence for the future. The little steer gave us 65lbs. of dried meat. and about 15lbs. of fat. The operation

concluded, we took leave of our companions; and although our material was reduced by the two horses on which they returned, Mr. Hodgson left us the greater part of his own equipment. The loss of the two horses caused us some little inconvenience, as it increased the loads of the animals. The daily ration of the party was now fixed at six pounds of flour per day, with three pounds of dried beef, which we found perfectly sufficient to keep up our strength.

ANNIVERSARY

1879: Canada

Vilhjalmur Stefansson, the Arctic explorer, was born in Canada of Icelandic parents on this day. He firmly believed that Europeans could learn to live off the land by adopting the ways of the Inuit, and during one five year period (from 1913) did just that. On his return, he made much of the fact that living on an all-meat diet during this time had no adverse effects on his health. He wrote of one meal:

My host was the seal-hunter whom we had first approached on the ice. . . . Our meal was of two courses: the first, meat (*seal meat*); the second, soup. The soup is made by pouring cold seal blood into the boiling broth immediately after the cooked meat has been taken out of the pot, and stirring briskly until the whole comes nearly (but never quite) to a boil. This makes a soup of thickness comparable to our English pea-soups, but if the pot be allowed to come to a boil, the blood will coagulate and settle to the bottom.

His experience convinced him of the dangers of a low-fat diet:

The groups that depend on the blubber animals are the most fortunate in the hunting way of life for they never suffer from fat-hunger. This trouble is worst, so far as North America is concerned, among those forest Indians who depend at times on rabbits, the leanest animal in the North, and who develop the extreme fat-hunger known as rabbit-starvation. Rabbit eaters, if they have no fat from another source—beaver, moose, fish—will develop diarrhoea in about a week, with headache, lassitude, a vague discomfort. If there are enough rabbits, the people eat till their stomachs are distended; but no matter how much they eat they feel unsatisfied. Some think a man will

die sooner if he eats continually of fat-free meat than if he eats nothing, but this is a belief on which sufficient evidence for a decision has not been gathered in the north. Deaths from rabbit-starvation, or from the eating of other skinny meat, are rare; for everyone understands the principle, and any possible preventive steps are naturally taken.

FOOD & WAR

1914: World War I, Commission for the Relief of Belgium

Herbert Hoover, Chairman of the Commission for the Relief of Belgium, made a progress report on this day to the diplomatic patrons of the organization.

We have now been, as you are aware, advised by our members in Belgium, who are cooperating with the Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation, which has branches all over the country, that to all intents and purposes the food supply of Belgium is exhausted and that the problem now confronting us is of wider import than was originally expected, as it now amounts to the provisioning of the whole nation, rich as well as poor. They estimate that the absolute minimum of foodstuffs which will be required as from the 1st of November is 80,000 tons of cereals per month together with some amount of bacon or lard, this being calculated upon the provision of a ration per them of 10 oz. per capitum, or considerably less than one-half of a soldier's ration. This, as we informed you, is in contrast to the normal imports and products of Belgium of something over 250,000 tons of cereals per month. . . .

We are also informed that the Comité National de Secours et d'Alimentation have, in cooperation with the various local authorities in Belgium, arranged to take possession of all private stores of foodstuffs in excess of three months' requirements in the hands of any one individual. There are probably not many of such stores, however, but the Comité wishes to be in a position to equitably distribute whatever there may be over the entire population.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1661: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys: “At night my wife and I had a good supper by ourselves, of a pullet hashed; which pleased me much to see my condition come to allow ourselves a dish like that. And so at night to bed.”

1662: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

Thence with Mr. Creede and Mr. Moore (who is got upon his legs and come to see my Lord) to Wilkinson’s, and there I did give them and Mr. Howe their dinner of roast beef, cost me 5s., and after dinner carried Mr. Moore as far as Paul’s in a coach, giving him direction about my law business, and there set him down.

1786: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde: “Sent Mr. and Mrs. Jeanes this Morning a large Sack of Apples (Beefans) a Couple of pigeons and a very fine fat Duck ready for the Spit—to them at their Parsonage at Witchingham.”

1892: USA

President Grover Cleveland wrote to his friend F. J. Parker, in Washington, thanking him for a gift of apples.

My Dear Sir: I have received through our friend Mr. Villard some of the most beautiful apples I have ever seen, for which I am indebted to your kindness and thoughtfulness. I desire to express to you my sincere thanks, and to say to you that a state that can produce such fruit as that which has decorated my table since the apples reached me, ought to be able to produce anything—even a Democratic majority.

NOVEMBER 4

STATE DINNER

1971: Washington

Prime minister of India, Indira Gandhi was entertained at dinner at the White House on this night. The menu was:

DINNER

Quenelles de Brochet en Vol-en-Vent

Schloss Johannisberger 1969

Suprême of Pheasant Véronique

Wild rice

Asparagus au Beurre

Louis Alartini Cabernet Sauvignon 1967

Bibb Lettuce Salad

Port de Salut Cheese

Louis Roederer Cristal 1962

Mousse Glacé au Praliné

Petits Fours

LUNATIC ASYLUM DIET

1867: New York

The Annual Report of the Commissioners of Public Charities and Correction of the City of New York included reports on many individual institutions in the city, including the following:

*Report of the Committee On Diet Of The Inmates Of The Lunatic Asylum,
Paralytic And Epileptic Hospitals.*

To the Board of Commissioners of Public Charities and Correction:

Gentlemen—Your Committee, appointed “to revise the Dietary Table of the Lunatic Asylum and the Paralytic and Epileptic Hospitals,” beg leave to present the following Report:

We have carefully examined the present dietaries of these Institutions, and find that many changes are called for as regards the quantity, variety and the preparation of the food, particularly for the Lunatic Asylum. The Dietary Table for the Paralytic and Epileptic Hospital is good; but the Dietary for the Lunatic Asylum is decidedly inferior to that of the penal institutions, and is even inferior to the Alms House Diet. In fact, its dietary is by far the most unsatisfactory on the Island. Not only does the quantity of food seem insufficient, but the cooking is utterly unscientific, and appears to be under no competent direction, though over one thousand persons are fed from the cook house.

The present diet-scale at the Lunatic Asylum is briefly as follows :

The breakfast is the same every day in the week, and consists of rye coffee, with milk and sugar and bread.

The supper is also the same during the week, consisting of tea (one drachm for each person), with milk and sugar, and bread.

Three days in the week, the patients get beef soup, with the soup-meat, and bread. The weight of the cooked meat, free from bones, is about one hundred and seventy pounds for one thousand persons. This small quantity is explained by the fact, that before the regular diet is issued to the patients, meat is cut off for the keepers, for “extras,” and for the Paralytic and Epileptic Hospital. Two days in the week the patients get mutton soup, with the soup-meat, and bread. The quantity of meat used for one thousand persons is four hundred pounds, weighed uncooked and with the bones. On one day in the week, the dinner consists of bean soup with pork, and bread: and on one day (Friday), mush and molasses, and bread.

This diet is evidently insufficient in quantity, and the food is unskillfully prepared. That it does not present the proper variety of alimentary principles, is shown by the fact that cases of scurvy among the patients are quite frequent every spring. It is true that the insane are more liable than others to this disease; but it does not occur to any extent in Asylums where the inmates are well nourished.

The suggestions which we have to make with regard to the dietaries of the Lunatic Asylum and the Paralytic and Epileptic Hospitals, are as follows:

A thoroughly educated, experienced and competent cook should have the immediate direction of the kitchen. This is more necessary in the Lunatic Asylum than in any of the Institutions under your charge. The cook should follow a proper dietary table, but should be allowed to exercise a certain discretion in varying from the table occasionally, so as to break in upon the routine from time to time. In this Institution it is, of course, a great advantage to have the constant personal supervision of a resident physician, who can regulate closely all the variations from the regular diet which are required in particular cases. The same variety in the modes of cooking—that is, roasting and baking—should be provided for here, as in the Bellevue Hospital; and care should be taken that the cooked food be transported from the cook-house to the different buildings, properly protected in suitable vessels.

Having provided for the proper preparation of food under the direction of a good cook, we respectfully recommend that the dietary table now in use for the Bellevue Hospital be adopted for the Lunatic Asylum and the Paralytic and Epileptic Hospital. The serving of the food in the manner adapted to the peculiar condition of the patients should be regulated by the Resident Physician. The above report is respectfully submitted.

A. FLINT, Jr., M. D., Chairman Committee.

FOOD & WAR

1775: American Revolutionary War

The ration for enlisted men was determined by Congress on this day. It was the first legislation of its type in the country.

The basic daily ration was to be 1lb bread or flour, 1lb beef or $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. pork or 1lb salt fish, and 1 pint of milk. In addition each man was to receive three pints of beans or peas or “vegetable equivalent” per week.

In December the allowance was modified. The meat ration was specified as

corned beef 4 days a week, salt fish one day per week, and fresh beef for two days. In winter when milk was scarce, the meat ration was to be larger. Fat in the form of six ounces of butter or nine ounces of lard was included, and the “vegetable equivalent” was specified to be onions, potatoes, and turnips.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1845: Britain

An early patent for a food preservation method was granted to Samuel Carson. His method applied to eggs, which were to be preserved by

puncturing them at one end with a pin, placing them in cases with the punctured end upwards. The lids of the cases are then soldered on, and the air exhausted from a tube in the lid, which has two openings, one of which leads into a steam boiler; the steam from this enters the case, and the water of condensation islet off through a hole in the bottom of the case.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1492: Cuba

Christopher Columbus was on his first voyage. One of his men thinks he has seen cinnamon trees, and Columbus notes the discussion in his journal (in which he refers to himself in the third person).

Martin Alonzo Pinzon came to him with two pieces of cinnamon and said that a Portuguese he had on his ship had seen an Indian who was carrying two very large handfuls of it, but that he had not dared to trade with him for it on account of the prohibition of the Admiral that no one should do any trading. He said further that the Indian had some bright reddish things like nuts. The Boatswain of the Pinta said that he had found trees of cinnamon. The Admiral then went there and found that it was not cinnamon. . . . These lands are very fertile. They are full of *mames* [yams] which are like carrots and taste like chestnuts and they have *faxones* [cow pea?] and *fabas* [probably the fava bean] very different from ours, and a great deal of cotton, which they do not sow and which grows in the mountains, large trees of it: and I believe they have it ready to gather all the time because I

saw the pods opened and others which were opening and flowers all on one tree and a thousand other kinds of fruits of which it is not possible for me to write and it must all be a profitable thing.” The Admiral says all this.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1661: London, England

From the Diary of Samuel Pepys: “I to the Miter (Mr. Rawlinson’s), where Mr. Pierce the purser had got us a most rare Chine of beef and a dish of marrow bones. Our Company . . . very merry.”

1820: USA

John Pintard, a business man of Huguenot ancestry wrote regularly from his home in New York to his married daughter in New Orleans. He was born in 1759, and in the following letter he wrote about the traditional food of his family.

In olden times in my good uncle’s family, and I suppose every other, there were state days for every dish, salt fish on Saturday, roast Turkey Sunday, the remainder of Saturday’s salt, or dumb fish, hashed up with vegetables and warmed in the frying pan for Monday, Roast beef Wednesday, pease porridge & sausages on Thursday, Apple Duplmings Friday, Pancakes Tuesday. This was pretty much the winter course, and always Alamode [a beef dish] on Saturday in summer, which was served up cold on Sunday to prevent cooking, or else forced meat ball pie. Hasty pudding all winter long for supper, & buckwheat cakes, which came into vogue just before the rev war [the American Revolutionary War], for breakfast. In Philadelphia this article is or used to be considered such a treat, as to be served up for tea in large domestic parties, where they are always prepared the size of the griddle, and cut into quarters. Then you have the courses of old fashion good feeding when abundance of the best was afforded at a very cheap rate. I have heard my good old uncle say that an excellent dinner of the best of the market could be provided within the compass of a single dollar, and that there were not many persons who could afford to give so extravagant a dinner.

NOVEMBER 5

GUY FAWKES NIGHT

England

The fifth of November is the anniversary in 1605 of the “Gunpowder Plot”—the failed attempt by a group of English Catholics to blow up the Houses of Parliament. One of the conspirators, Guy Fawkes, was caught, tortured, tried, and executed, and the night is named after him. Public safety laws have largely prevented the bonfires, fireworks and the burning of effigies of Fawkes which used to occur in every neighborhood, but the food traditions are still popular.

Foods particularly associated with the night are baked potatoes, toffee, apples and gingerbread. In the North of England, a particular type of gingerbread made with oatmeal and black treacle and called Parkin is eaten.

An article from 1857 describes the eating of parkin on November 5 as already a very old custom at that time:

A very old custom, coeval, apparently, with the annual bonfires and fireworks, prevails to this day in the West Riding of Yorkshire, of preparing against the anniversary of Gunpowder Plot, a kind of oatmeal gingerbread, if I may so call it, and religiously partaking of it on the “dreadful” day, and subsequently. The local name of the delicacy is Parkin, and it is usually seen in the form of massive loaves, substantial cakes, or bannocks.

Yorkshire Parkin

One pound of oatmeal, two ounces of butter, one ounce of ginger, and a few carraways; warm one pound of treacle, mix all together into a thin paste, pour into shallow dishes buttered; bake in a slow oven, and let it grow cold before turning out.

—*Young Englishwoman: A Volume of Pure Literature, New Fashions, and Pretty Needlework Designs* (1867)

GUNPOWDER TREASON DINNER

1659: England

The parish of “St Botolph without Bishopsgate” held a Gunpowder Treason dinner at the Red Lion. The expenses list show the food purchased for the dinner.

five stone, two pounds of beef	11s 6d
two legs of mutton	6s 6d
four capons	10s 0d
four mince pies	12s0d
a gallon of canary	8s0d
agallon of claret	3s 4d
twenty dozen of bread	1pound 0s0d
for a sermon	10s 0d
the porter	4d
the sexton	8d
the maid	1s 0d

the main

15 00

two ounces of tobacco

2s 0d

the house bill of the Red Lion 1pound 5s 10d

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

1977: London, England

An environmental officer visited the restaurant of one of the former wives of the Ugandan dictator Idi Amin in Forest Gate, London. The officer was so appalled by the state of the premises, that he closed the restaurant on the spot. Some of the findings included a lack of soap, towels, hot water, a “grey furry thing” that turned out to be a decomposing mouse, and a serious infestation with cockroaches and mice.

Sarah Kyolaba Amin pleaded guilty to seven offenses under the 1990 Food Safety Act . She was fined one thousand pounds and given a two-year suspended sentence.

The restaurant, selling African food, was allowed to re-open in December 1997, when it was certified as no longer posing an imminent risk to public health.

“Suicide Sarah” was a go-go dancer before she became Idi’s fifth wife in 1975. The wedding banquet cost two million pounds, and Idi cut the wedding cake with his ceremonial sword.

FICTIONAL FOOD

1699

This was supposedly the day that Gulliver was shipwrecked on the island of Lilliput. He described a banquet at the Lilliputian court: “The second course was two ducks, trussed up in the form of fiddles; sausages and pudding resembling flutes and hautboys, and a breast of veal in the shape of a harp.”

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1811: USA

From the journal of Wilson Price Hunt's overland expedition in 1811–1812:

I spent the 5th (Nov) making all necessary arrangements for procuring food for several days, until we had news from Mr. Reed. We caught four beaver, drying the tails and the innards. I had the dried meat inspected and aired.

1861: Australia

From the journals of John McDouall Stuart's explorations into the centre of the continent. McDouall was suffering from scurvy at this time.

Spring, Conglomerate Rock, The Hugh. Started at I again feel tired from the shaking of the horses and the stretcher. The swelling of my gums and the black blisters, which have been so very painful for such a long time back, are slowly giving way before some vegetable food which I have been able to get since coming into the green, grassy country; I hope it will soon cure me. My teeth are still loose, but it is a great thing to get a little relief from a great mouthful of swollen, blistered, and most painful gums. When my mouth was closed I had scarcely room for my tongue; the blisters are now much reduced.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1763: France

From the Journal of Tobias Smollett's *Travels Through France and Italy*. In a letter from Montpellier:

In this country I was almost poisoned with garlic, which they mix in their ragouts, and all their sauces; nay, the smell of it perfumes the very chambers, as well as every person you approach. I was also very sick of . . . ficas, grives, or thrushes, and other little birds, which are served up twice a day at all ordinaries on the road. They make their appearance in vine-leaves, and are always half raw, in which condition the French choose to eat

them, rather than run the risque of losing the juice by over-roasting.

1855: USA

From the Journal of Henry D. Thoreau:

I hate the present modes of living and getting a living. Farming and shopkeeping and working at a trade or profession are all odious to me. I should relish getting my living in a simple, primitive fashion. . . . I was suggesting once to a man who was wincing under some of the consequences of our loose and expensive way of living, "But you might raise all your own potatoes, etc., etc." We had often done it at our house and had some to sell. At which he demurring, I said, setting it high, "You could raise twenty bushels even." "But," said he, "I use thirty-five." "How large is your family?" "A wife and three infant children." This was the real family; I need not enumerate those who were hired to help eat the potatoes and waste them. So he had to hire a man to raise his potatoes.

1918: France

Future president Harry Truman was on active military duty France, and while he was away he wrote regularly to his sweetheart and future wife, Bess Wallace. His letter on this day was from "Somewhere in France."

Dear Bess,

. . . That helmet picture was a dickens of a looking thing but I thought perhaps you'd like to see what I looked like as a real fightin' man. It was taken in a little town at the foot of the Vosges Mountains where I got some jelly custard from a French woman that tasted exactly like United States? I'll never forget that place.

NOVEMBER 6

A WEDDING DINNER

1524: Dresden

The wedding of Elector Joachim II of Brandenburg to Magdalena of Saxony was followed, as is customary, with a fine dinner. The bill of fare was:

- *First service:* Blackcock with a sweet sauce, greens, river trout, roasts, almond tarts, confections, and a subtlety representing Adam and Eve in a garden, in between and tree with a snake holding an apple in its mouth.
- *Second service:* Wild boar, roasted suckling pig, partridges with yellow sauce, and a subtlety representing Abraham and his son, and a tower made from almonds and sugar.
- *Third service:* Green Pike, hot cakes with wafers, a deer haunch wrapped in gilded pastry, almond pottage, and a subtlety representing the death of Saint Katherine.
- *Fourth Service:* A pressed pig's head with apples and wine vinegar, stewed pears, fritters, a jellied fish dish, and a subtlety representing Noah's Ark, surrounded by sugar wafers.

THE PEPPER TRADE

1846: USA

The last bulk cargo of pepper arrived in Salem, Massachusetts, from Sumatra on this day, aboard the brig *Lucilla*.

In 1654, the American merchant Elihu Yale sent two of his employees to Aceh, then a powerful independent kingdom in the north of Sumatra. His plan was to try to break the predominantly Dutch monopoly on the spice trade. In 1806, the largest single cargo of pepper on record was unloaded in Salem, from the ship *Eliza*. The 512 ton vessel had carried 500 hundred tons of pepper in one voyage.

The importance of Salem in the pepper industry is demonstrated by the fact that a hundred years later as far away as Australia, whole peppercorns were still called "Salem Pepper."

FROZEN MEAT

1872: Australia

The Victorian Exhibition opened in Melbourne. James Harrison, a pioneer of the refrigeration process exhibited “Fresh Meat frozen and packed as if for a voyage, so that the refrigerating process may be continued for any required period”. His innovations subsequently led to the fitting out of the *Norfolk* for a trial shipment of frozen meat to England. Unfortunately, there were technical problems, the meat was ruined, and so was Harrison’s career.

THE POTATO

1847: USA

A report of the potato blight in North America appeared in the *Scientific American* on this day. The disease would ultimately spread to Britain and Europe, and cause the great Irish Potato Famine.

We hear of the progress of the potato rot in Canada, new Jersey, Vermont, and western New York, in addition to portions of the country which have before been mentioned. The *Rochester American* states that the effluvia arising from so many fields is absolutely sickening.

AN ANCIENT FISH FOR DINNER

1497: Germany

A strange, apparently very ancient, and certainly very large fish was said to have been caught on this day in the pond adjacent to the imperial castle at Lautern. It was a pike, and justify the recording of the event, but also there was around the neck of the fish a gilded copper ring made of small links, inscribed with Greek letters. After the fish had found its way to the tables of the Elector Phillip of Heidelberg, the ring was sent to the treasury. The inscription was translated and said “I am the fish, placed first of all the fishes in the lake by the hands of Emperor Frederick the Second, October 5th of the year 1230.”

FOOD & WAR

1782: American Revolutionary War

John Howard, the English prison reformer, visited Forton Prison in Portsmouth, England, where American prisoners of war were housed, and reported on the conditions as follows:

At my visit, Nov. 6, 1782, I found there was no separation of the Americans from other prisoners of war, and they had the same allowance of bread, viz: one pound and a half each. There were 154 French, 83 Dutch and 133 Americans. Of these, 12 French, 25 Dutch and 9 Americans were in the hospital. The wards were not clean. No regulations hung up. I weighed several of the 6 lb. loaves and they all wanted some ounces in weight.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1492: Cuba

Christopher Columbus was on his first voyage. His journal contains an early mention of maize by a European. The two men (who were not botanists) that Columbus sent inland on a reconnoitering expedition return and report on the country and their meeting with local tribes. They find maize, but appear to misidentify it as millet (*panizo*): “The land is very fertile and very well cultivated with those *mames* and *fexoes* and beans very different from ours, that same *panizo* and a great quantity of cotton.”

Panizo was mentioned in the journal on October 17, when Columbus was in the Bahamas, but it is not clear whether the plant was actually sighted there.

1811: USA

From the journal of Wilson Price Hunt’s overland expedition in 1811–1812:

On the 6th, despite our efforts, we found only one fish in the net. Two of Mr. Reed’s men returned. After they had explored for two days they realized that the river did not improve farther downstream. Consequently we agreed with Mr. Crooks that the best course was to divide our company into two parties, each to proceed on its own. For that reason I cached still other things, and all the essentials I put into packs of about twenty pounds each

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1663: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys: “And at noon to the Change to the Coffeehouse; and among other things, heard Sir John Cutler say that of his own experience in time of thunder, so many barrels of beer that have a piece of Iron laid upon them will not be stirred, and others will.”

Pepys is referring to an old superstition that thunder will damage beer, but this can be prevented by laying a bar of iron on the cask.

1795: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde: “Mr. Girling sent us a Leash of Partridges this Even’. Gave to the Servant that brought them 0. 1. 0. Dinner to day a boiled Chicken and a Pigs Face and some beef Steaks.”

1800: England

From the *Grasmere Journals* of Dorothy Wordsworth, sister of the poet William Wordsworth, with whom she lived: “I was baking bread, dinner, and parkins.”

Parkin is a type of gingerbread made in some parts of Britain, from oatmeal and black treacle (see November 5).

ANNIVERSARY

1896: England

This was the birthday of Raymond Postgate, English social historian, mystery writer, and food commentator. He founded the very influential Good Food Club (May 20 1950) and subsequently became editor of the Good Food Guide. In the introduction of the 1959–1960 guide he listed the main food crimes of the time as including false pie crusts, mock cream, bottled mayonnaise, hot plating, the covering of thinly sliced cold joints of meat with hot gravy (which was recommended by the Ministry of Food during the war), bad coffee and cheese

recommended by the Ministry of Food during the war), but coffee and cheese boards consisting of processed or factory made cheeses.

NOVEMBER 7

ON THE AIR

1933: USA

American radio's longest running radio cookery show, "The Mary Lee Taylor Program," debuted on CBS Radio on this day, and ran until October 9, 1954. Initially the episodes were fifteen minutes in length, and aired twice a week. By 1948 it had been moved to NBC, and was aired on Saturday mornings to allow the increased number of women now in the workforce, to listen to the program. Each show was now thirty minutes long, and included a short dramatic episode in the lives of fictional newlyweds, Sally and Jimmy Carter, after which the "recipe for happiness" was given. Naturally, recipes were designed to include Pet Milk ("the first evaporated milk")—the product of the sponsors, the Dairy Goodness People.

WHAT MAKES DOUGH RISE?

1857: USA

The *Scientific American* published on this day contained an article which explained how bread dough rises.

What makes Dough Rise?

The cause of the rising is the vinous fermentation produced by the spontaneous change of the gluten or albumen, which acts upon the sugar, breaking it up into alcohol and carbonic acid gas. If the fermentation is regular and equal, the kneading and intermixture thorough, and the dough kept sufficiently and uniformly warm, the production of gas will take place evenly throughout the dough, so that the bread, when cut, will exhibit numerous minute cavities or pores, equally distributed throughout. For its capability of being raised, dough depends upon the elastic and extensible properties of its gluten, which is developed by the admixture of water with

four. Hence the proper quantity of water is that which imparts to the gluten the greatest tenacity—an excess of it lowering the adhesiveness of the gluten particles. The toughness of the gluten prevents the small bubbles of gas from uniting into larger ones, or from rising to the surface. Being caught the instant they are produced, and expanding in the exact spot where they are generated, they swell or raise the dough. All rising of bread depends upon this principle—the liberation of a gas evenly throughout the glutinous dough, No matter what the mode of fermentation, or what the substances or agents employed instead of it, they all bring about the result in the same way.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1805: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806. The party finally saw the Pacific Ocean on this day. William Clark wrote:

A cloudy foggy morning Some rain. we Set out early proceeded under the Stand. Side under a high rugged hills with Steep ascent the Shore boalt and rocky, the fog so thick we could not See across the river, two canoes of Indians met and returned with us to their viliage, they gave us to eate Some fish, and Sold us, fish, Wappa to roots three dogs and 2 otter skins for which we gave fish hooks principally of which they were verry fond. . . .

Great joy in camp we are in View of the Ocian, this great Pacific Ocean which we been So long anxious to See. and the roeing or noise made by the waves brakeing on the rocky Shores (as I Suppose) may be heard distictly.

1811: USA

From the journal of Wilson Price Hunt's overland expedition in 1811–1812: "On the 7th I returned to our camp of October 28. We had wasted nine days in futile explorations. We had caught eight beaver; but we had eaten the dried meat, for its quality is superior to beaver meat."

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1711: America

From the diary of William Byrd of Westover, Virginia:

I rose about 7 o'clock and read two chapters in Hebrew and some Greek in Homer. I said my prayers and ate boiled milk for breakfast. I paid £500 to Mr. Tullitt for the College. About 10 I caused my secretary to be brought to my lodgings from the capitol. The wind blew very hard at northwest so that my wife and her company could not come from Gloucester. Some of the burgesses began to come and the House met and adjourned. I dined upon gingerbread because I could find no company to dine with.

1783: England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde. He dines at Weston House; the guests included the Bishop and his wife.

We had for Dinner some stewed Carp, Ham and Fowls, a fine Cygnet roasted &c. &c.—the first Course—a brace of Pheasants roasted, a fine Hare roasted, Blamange, Green peas, Jelly &c. the second Course. Many Dishes of Desert afterwards but nothing extra. . . . Sr. Willm. Jeneregan . . . Lady Jeneregan . . . are both of the Romish Persuasion. It being Friday and a Fast Day of Course for them, they however eat Fowl, Pheasant and Swan and Sr. William eat some Ham.

1844: Australia

The young Annabella Boswell, at Lake Innes near Port Macquarie, wrote in her journal:

Dear Mamma's birthday. . . . Of course we had luncheon out of doors, and there were many suggestions as to where we should pic-nic, but it was too hot to go far. We had the usual pies and pastry, but an unusual addition in a basket of oysters, and a jug of beer.

NOVEMBER 8

BREAKFAST ABOARD

1903: At Sea

The breakfast menu aboard the NDL line S.S. *Kaiser Wilhelm* on this day surely had something to suit everyone.

Breakfast

Grapefruit

Oranges Apples

Hominy Oatmeal

Sole au vin blanc

Salted mackerel Kippered herrings

Chicken Croquettes

Hashed lamb au gratin

Veal cutlet á la Milanaise

Fillet á la Nelson

Beefsteak, broiled, fried

Mutton chops, broiled, fried

Yorkshire ham Wiltshire bacon

Saratoga chips Baked potatoes

French fried potatoes

Potatoes sautéés

Buckwheat-Cerealine- Rice cakes

Omelet German pancake

French pancake

Omelet with asparagus

Eggs á la viennoise

Poached eggs au parmesan

Cold: Sablath sausage Roast beef

Marmalade Ginger Jelly

Casse-museau

Brioche Crescents

Coffee Chocolate Tea Cocoa

FOOD & WAR

1940: Britain, World War II

From the wartime diary of housewife, Nella Last:

It's the custom for fish and fruit shops in Barrow to print their special lines on the outside window with a small brush dipped in whitening: 'SPECIAL! RABBITS, CRABS.' The better-class shops *never* do, and I was really amused by one such shop today for on both windows—its on a corner—was printed neatly and in extra large letters:

- NO EGGS
- NO LEMONS
- NO ONIONS

- NO LEEKS
- NO PAPER BAGS

I wondered how many times Mrs Jones had to say those words before, in exasperation, she printed them on the window. The fishmongers shop was quite nicely stocked—especially with rabbits. I got one and paid 1s.8d. Considering the time of year, I thought they were an indifferent sample—I like to see pale pink flesh and the kidneys sunk in creamy fat. I hunted well through the furry furrows, and did not feel so well suited with what I got finally.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1620: Provincetown, Colonial America

Sixteen hungry men led by Captain Myles Standish set off on an exploratory expedition into the interior of their new land.

8th: In the morning so soon as we could see the trace, . . . and yet could meet with none of them, nor their houses, nor find any fresh water, which we greatly desired, and stood in need of, for we brought neither beer nor water with us, and our victuals was only biscuit and Holland cheese, and a little bottle of aquavita, so as we were sore athirst. About ten o'clock we came into a deep valley, full of brush, wood-gaile, and long grass, through which we found little paths or tracks, and there we saw a deer, and found springs of fresh water, of which we were heartily glad, and sat us down and drunk our first New England water with as much delight as ever we drunk drink in all our lives.

1768

From the *Endeavour* Journal of Joseph Banks:

“*[T]o Brasil.*” About noon a young shark was seen from the Cabbin windows following the ship, who immediately took a bait and was caught on board; he provd to be the *Squalus Charcharias* of Linn[aeus] and assisted us in clearing up much confusion which almost all authors had

made about that species; with him came on board 4 sucking fish, *echineis remora* Linn. who were preserved in spirit. Notwithstanding it was twelve O'Clock before the shark was taken, we made shift to have a part of him stewd for dinner, and very good meat he was, at least in the opinion of Dr Solander and myself, tho some of the Seamen did not seem to be fond of him, probably from some prejudice founded on the species sometimes feeding on human flesh.

1811: USA

From the journal of Wilson Price Hunt's overland expedition in 1811–1812:

I cached still more goods on the 8th, distributing to each member of our party all that remained of our food. Every person had five and a quarter pounds of meat. We had, besides, forty pounds of corn, twenty of fat, and nearly five pounds of bouillon tablets. That had to keep more than twenty people alive.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1711: America

From the diary of William Byrd of Westover, Virginia:

I rose about 7 o'clock and read nothing because my wife was preparing to go away home. I neglected to say my prayers and ate boiled milk for breakfast. . . . I drank some tea till about 11. . . . About 2 o'clock I dined with the Council at Marot's and ate mutton for dinner. . . . I took a walk to see the College and Governor's house and in the evening returned to the coffeehouse where we played at cards and I won 20 shillings.

1801: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde:

Mrs Custance and her two Daughters and with them, a Mrs. Hobart with her Sister, Miss Harriet Beauchamp . . . made us a Morning Visit after Divine Service and stayed with us near an Hour. They all eat some of our small

Cakes. . . . N.B. Mrs. Custance brought us a fine Hen-Pheasant.

LAST MEAL

1793: France

Marie-Jeanne Phlippon Roland (“Madame Roland”) was a supporter of the French Revolution, and was therefore seriously out of favor during the ensuing Reign of Terror. Her last meal before she met “Madame Guillotine” close-up, was said to be poached eggs, a small wedge of Brie cheese and an apple.

NOVEMBER 9

LORD MAYOR’S DAY

1829: London, England

The Lord Mayor’s Banquet at the Guildhall. November 9 was the date for the swearing-in of the Lord Mayor elect at Windsor for many centuries. The ceremony was followed by a grand procession to the Guildhall for the traditional dinner. The general bill of fare of the dinner in 1829 comprised:

200 tureens of turtle, containing 3 pints each; 50 dishes of chickens and pullets; 50 capons; 30 boiled turkeys and oyster sauce, hot; 45 hams, ornamented; 30 tongues, ditto; 15 stewed rumps of beef, hot; 30 dishes of shell-fish; 15 raised pies; 30 pigeon ditto; 6 dishes of fish; 2 barons of beef; 3 pieces of sirloin; 3 ditto ribs; 2 rumps of beef; 3 rounds of beef; 50 dishes of mince pies; 30 marrow puddings; 40 apple and other tarts; 105 jellies and creams; 120 dishes of brocoli and potatoes.

Remove.—40 turkeys; 105 dishes game; 30 dishes wild fowl.

Dessert.—160 pounds weight of pineapples; 150 dishes hothouse grapes; 50 dishes of apples, various sorts; 50 dishes pears; 40 dishes walnuts; 100 ornamented cakes, &c; 50 dishes dried fruit; 50 dishes preserves; 200 ice creams.

Wines.—Champagne, Hock, Claret, Madeira, Port, Sherry.

A “Remove” (or *relevé*) was a particular feature of the usual structure of meals from medieval times until the second half of the nineteenth century. We now call that old method *service à la Française* to distinguish it from the form of service which gradually replaced it, and which we now call *service à la Russe*. In the earlier system a meal consisted of two or three courses which contained both sweet and savoury dishes (although the distinction was not so clear then. A crucial element of this form of service was that, before the guests entered the dining room, all the dishes would be placed on the table in an ordered, balanced and hierarchical arrangement. At the completion of the course, the dishes would be removed, and another course would be laid out in a balanced and harmonious way. During each course, some dishes, assumed to have been enjoyed early, such as soups and other light dishes would be “removed,” and replaced with others—because a balanced arrangement of the table was crucial, and empty spaces were not acceptable. These replacement dishes were also called “removes.”

SLOW FOOD MOVEMENT

1989: Paris, France

The Slow Food Movement was founded with the signing of its manifesto at the *Opera Comique*, by delegates from fifteen countries. The movement now has chapters in one hundred and fifty countries.

Slow Food was the brainchild of Carlo Petrini. The stimulus was the public response to the opening of a McDonald’s restaurant near the historic Spanish Steps in Rome.

The organization sums up its philosophy with these words:

Slow Food stands at the crossroads of ecology and gastronomy, ethics and pleasure. It opposes the standardization of taste and culture, and the unrestrained power of the food industry multinationals and industrial agriculture. We believe that everyone has a fundamental right to the pleasure of good food and consequently the responsibility to protect the heritage of food, tradition and culture that make this pleasure possible. Our association believes in the concept of neo-gastronomy—recognition of the strong connections between plate, planet, people and culture.

LIMBURGER CHEESE

1996: Britain

The edition of the prestigious British medical journal *The Lancet* published on this day included an article entitled *On human odour, malaria mosquitoes, and Limburger cheese*. The authors showed that the female mosquito *Anopheles gambiae*, is attracted equally to the smell of Limburger cheese, and to the smell of human feet. This research earned its authors the Ig Nobel prize (a parody of the annual Nobel prize) in 2006, which might be interpreted that it was trivial, however, mosquito traps baited with Limburger cheese have been used successfully in Africa, in helping control malaria.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1620: Provincetown, Colonial America

Sixteen hungry men led by Captain Myles Standish set off on an exploratory expedition into the interior of their new land on this day.

9th We went on further and found new stubble, of which they had gotten corn this year, and many walnut trees full of nuts, and great store of strawberries, and some vines. . . . Passing thus a field or two, which were not great, we came to another which had also been new gotten, and there we found where a house had been, and four or five old planks laid together; also we found a great kettle which had been some ship's kettle and brought out of Europe. There was also a heap of sand, made like the former—but it was newly done, we might see how they had paddled it with their hands—which we dugged up, and in it we found a little old basket full of fair Indian corn, and digged further and found a fine great new basket full of very fair corn of this year, with some thirty-six goodly ears of corn, some yellow, some red, and others mixed with blue, which was a very goodly sight. The basket was round, and narrow at the top; it held about three or four bushels, which was as much as two of us could lift up from the ground, and was very handsomely and cunningly made. But whilst we were busy about these things, we set our men sentinel in a round ring, all but two or three which digged up the corn. We were in suspense what to do with it and the kettle, and at length, after much consultation, we concluded to take the kettle and

as much of the corn as we could carry away with us; and when our shallop came, if we could find any of the people, and come to parley with them, we would give them the kettle again, and satisfy them for their corn. So we took all the ears, and put a good deal of the loose corn in the kettle for two men to bring away on a staff; besides, they that could put any into their pockets filled the same. The rest we buried again, for we were so laden with armor that we could carry no more.

1769: Polynesia

From the *Endeavour* Journal of Joseph Banks:

“*Opoorage*” A little before sunset we went home with the Indians to see them eat their supper. It consisted of fish, shell fish, lobsters and birds: these were dressd either by broiling them upon a skewer which was stuck into the ground leaning over the fire, or in ovens as we calld them at Otahite which were holes in the ground filld with provision and hot stones and coverd over with leaves and Earth.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1660: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

So to the office, and from thence to dinner with Mr. Wivell at the Hoop Tavern, where we had Mr. Shepley, Talbot, Adams, Mr. Chaplin and Osborne, and our dinner given us by Mr. Ady and another, Mr. Wine, the King’s fishmonger. Good sport with Mr. Talbot, who eats no sort of fish, and there was nothing else till we sent for a neat’s tongue.

1666: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys: “Being come home, we to Cards till 2 in the morning; and drinking lamb’s-wool, to bed.”

Lamb’s Wool is a drink made from hot, sweet, spiced ale mixed with the pulp of roasted apples. It was a traditional drink at Hallowe’en, which occurred during

the harvest season, and at Twelfth night, when it was used to “wassail” or toast the orchard fruit trees to encourage a good new crop. There are several theories as to the origin of the name. It may be derived from *La Maes Abhal*, a pagan celebration of the apple harvest, or it may simply be that the hot, fluffy roasted apple pulp floating on the top of the drink looked like lamb’s wool.

The poem *Twelfth Night* by Robert Herrick (1591–1674) includes a description of Lamb’s Wool which essentially amounts to a recipe.

Next crowne the bowle full

With gentle lamb’s wooll;

Adde sugar, nutmeg and ginger’

With store of ale too;

And thus ye must doe

To make a Wassaile a swinger.

NOVEMBER 10

GREEN GODDESS SALAD

1923: USA

A very persistent story says that Green Goddess Dressing was created at San Francisco’s Palace Hotel on this very day in honor of the actor George Arliss, the star of the stage show of the same name. The story usually specifies that the dish was prepared at a dinner on opening night. In actual fact, the stage show did not make it to San Francisco, so there was no bit opening night celebration, nor was George Arliss a guest at the hotel at that time. Some even more convincing evidence that this story a myth is that there was an advertisement in the *Rolfe Arrow*, of January 31, 1919—before the play was ever performed—by a purveyor of salad dressings who listed Green Goddess Dressing, along with Caesar, Blue Cheese, and Creamy Italian Dressing (8 oz. bottles for 69c.).

The story does not quite end there, however. The *movie* of the same name, also starring George Arliss, did open on the night of November 10, 1923, at a theatre in Oakland. A coincidence, or did the movie act as a serendipitous promotional activity for the existing dressing?

In fact, of course, recipes are never truly “invented”—they always develop from existing recipes with similar basic ingredients or combinations, or similar concepts.

So-called classic recipes for Green Goddess Dressing usually include the following ingredients in one form or another: anchovies, mayonnaise, vinegar, green onion, garlic, parsley, tarragon and chives. Historically, of course, “green” dressings, sauces, and salads containing large amounts of herbs, onions, anchovies, etc., have been popular for centuries.

The really interesting question is—who gave the green herb puree the particular name, and why?

IN THE NEWS

1923: Britain

The *Guardian* newspaper carried the following article on this day:

Steak sizzled, but man did not

Experiment in dry air at 200 degrees

In a paper upon “Some effects of high temperature upon miners,” read before the Mining Engineers’ Institution yesterday, Professor K. Neville Moss advocated the use of salt in preventing fatigue.

In a paper upon “Some effects of high temperature upon miners,” read before the Mining Engineers’ Institution yesterday, Professor K. Neville Moss advocated the use of salt in preventing fatigue.

Progress in British coal mining, he declared, would depend in the future upon the ability of engineers to mine coal at great depths. Miners working

in hot dry places drank large quantities of water and perspired freely. This caused cramp and fatigue, and clogged the kidneys, so that the excess of water in the body became formidable. . . .

. . . Dr. J. S. Haldane, speaking of sweating and how the living body could adapt itself to different temperatures by evaporation on the skin, mentioned an experiment in which a man was enclosed in a chamber of dry air at a temperature of 200 degrees. A steak was also in the chamber, and the man watched the steak cooking in the heat, without himself being affected.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1829: USA

Anthony Doolittle, of Ann Arbor, Michigan, was granted Patent No. 5,711Xa patent for “Art of distilling the meal of maize or Indian corn.”

Most of the patents prior to 1836 were lost in a fire in December 1836, and only about 2,000 of the almost 10,000 documents were recovered. The only details of these patents are those which appear in other registers and reports. The *Journal of the Franklin Institute . . . devoted to the mechanical arts, manufactures, general science, and the recording of American and other patented inventions*, Vol. V, published in 1830 had this note on Doolittle’s patent:

The patentee describes his particular manner of producing fermentation, which, as it is probable he may not think it for his interest, we shall not at present publish. He states that when the fermentation is completed in the manner directed, “ a beautiful limpid oil, to the amount of about half a gallon, or one pint to a bushel of corn, will be found floating on the surface of the beer, or liquor, in the tub.” This is to be skimmed off, and distillation effected in the usual way, when from four to six quarts more of whiskey will be obtained from every bushel of meal, than by any process heretofore known, and of a greatly improved quality.

“Now what I claim as new, and as my own invention, is the procuring of the oil above specified by the fermentation of the meal of maize, or Indian corn, and thereby increasing the quantity and improving the quality of the spirit, or whiskey, on distillation.”

We will only add, as regards the oil, that “there are more things in heaven and earth than have been dreamed of in our philosophy.”

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1619: At Sea

From the journals of Jens Munck’s voyage in search for a NorthWest passage to India in 1619–1620:

On the 10th of November, which was St. Martin’s Eve, the men shot some ptarmigan, with which we had to content ourselves, instead of St. Martin’s goose; and I ordered a pint of Spanish wine for each bowl to be given to the men, besides their daily allowance; wherewith the whole crew were well satisfied, even merry and joyful; and of the ship’s beer there was given them as much as they liked. But, afterwards, when the frost got the upper hand, the beer froze to the bottom, so that I was afraid of letting the men drink of it before they had well melted and boiled it again ; for which reason, I had every fresh barrel, as it was taken up for consumption, boiled afresh, because, in any case, it was better than snow water, which otherwise would have had to be melted for drinking or mixing with wine. However, in this matter, I let the men follow their own inclination, because the common people, after all, are so disposed that, whatever is most strongly forbidden them, they, notwithstanding, are most apt to do on the sly, without considering whether it be beneficial or hurtful to them.

1769: Polynesia

From the *Endeavour* Journal of Joseph Banks:

“*Opoorage*” This day was employd in an excursion to view the large river . . . so we agreed to stop our disquisition here and go ashore to dine. A tree in the neighbourhood on which were many shaggs nests and old shaggs setting by them confirmd our resolution; an attack was consequently made on the Shaggs and about 20 soon killd and as soon broild and eat, every one declaring that they were excellent food as indeed I think they were. Hunger is certainly most excellent sauce, but since our fowls and ducks have been gone we find ourselves able to eat any kind of Birds (for indeed we throw

away none) without even that kind of seasoning. Fresh provision to a seaman must always be most acceptable if he can get over the small prejudices which once affected several in this ship, most or all of whom are now by vertue of good example compleatly curd. Our repast ended we proceeded down the river again.

1840: Australia

From the journal of Edward John Eyre (1815–1901) on an expedition into the inland of Central Australia:

Getting the party away about five o'clock this morning, I persuaded one of the natives, named "Wilgurdy," an intelligent cheerful old man, to accompany us as a guide, and as an inducement, had him mounted on a horse, to the great admiration and envy of his fellows, all of whom followed us on foot, keeping up in a line with the dray through the scrub, and procuring their food as they went along, which consisted of snakes, lizards, guanans, bandicoots, rats, wallabies, *etc. etc.* and it was surprising to see the apparent ease with which, in merely walking across the country, they each procured an abundant supply for the day.

In one place in the scrub we came to a large circular mound of sand, about two feet high, and several yards in circumference; this they immediately began to explore, carefully throwing away the sand with their hands from the centre, until they had worked down to a deep narrow hole, round the sides of which, and embedded in the sand, were four fine large eggs of a delicate pink colour, and fully the size of a goose egg. I had often seen these hills before, but did not know that they were nests, and that they contained so valuable a prize to a traveller in the desert. The eggs were presented to me by the natives, and when cooked were of a very rich and delicate flavour. The nest was that of a wild pheasant, (*Leipoa*), a bird of the size of a hen pheasant of England, and greatly resembling it in appearance and plumage; these birds are very cautious and shy, and run rapidly through the underwood, rarely flying unless when closely pursued. The shell of the egg is thin and fragile, and the young are hatched entirely by the heat of the sun, scratching their way out as soon as they are born, at which time they are able to shift for themselves.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1711: America

From the diary of William Byrd of Westover, Virginia:

At night I went to the coffeehouse where came some other gentlemen. I played at cards and won 5 shillings. Then I went to my lodgings where I said my prayers and had good health good thoughts, and good humor, thank God Almighty. At the coffeehouse I ate some chicken pie and drank a bottle of the President's wine.

1764: Nice, France

From the Journal of Tobias Smollett's *Travels Through France and Italy*:

Besides wheat, rye, barley, and oats, this country produces a good deal of Meliga, or Turkish wheat, which is what we call Indian corn. I have, in a former letter, observed that the meal of this grain goes by the name polenta, and makes excellent hasty-pudding, being very nourishing, and counted an admirable pectoral [i.e., is good for the chest].

1786: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde: "We dined . . . at Weston House . . . Mr. Chamberlain who is a Roman Catholick Priest. . . . It being Friday Mr. Chamberlain eat no Meat only some Fish and some Rice Pudding."

1792: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde. Briton (his young servant) returned time enough to wait at dinner: "He brough us some Whitings which we had for dinner, with boiled Beef, Beef-Stake Pye &c."

1856: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau:

About the 10th of November, I first noticed long bunches of very small dark-purple or black grapes fallen on the dry leaves in the ravine east of Spring's house. Quite a large mass of clusters remained hanging on the leafless vine, thirty feet overhead there, till I left, on the 24th November. These grapes were much shrivelled, but they had a very agreeably spicy acid taste, evidently not acquired till after the frosts. I thought them quite a discovery and ate many from day to day, swallowing the skins and stones, and recommended them to Spring. He said that they were very much like a certain French grape, which he had eaten in France. It is a true frost grape, but apparently answers to *Vitis æstivalis*.

NOVEMBER 11

MARTINMAS

Martinmas is the feast day of Saint Martin of Tours. Martin is the patron saint of wine growers, tavern keepers, and drunkards, and he is also referred to as the Father of monastical winemaking. It was the tradition in Europe to taste the wine from the new vintage on his feast day.

Martin is also strongly associated with the harvest, which is well under way in the northern hemisphere at this time. This was the traditional day on which farmers slaughtered the beasts they could not keep and feed over the winter. As much as possible of the meat was preserved by salting, smoking and drying, to tide the family over the dreary days of winter ahead. What could not be preserved was eaten over the next few days in a glorious meat-feast, hence the alternative name for Martinmas—"Split-Stomach Day." Sausage-making was done on a large scale both to prepare salami-types for keeping, and fresh sausages for immediate eating. Nothing of course was wasted, and the animal blood was used to make Black Puddings, giving rise to yet another popular name for the day—the Feast of Sausages and Black Puddings.

Goose is almost obligatory in many parts of Europe at Martinmas. It is usually served roasted, with the traditional accompaniments representing regional variations, such as red cabbage or prunes or apples. In Sweden, it used to be a tradition to have a banquet in which goose was served in many ways, starting with "black soup" made from goose blood and offal, spiced and sweetened with fruit.

Black Pudding

Boil a peck of grits for half an hour in water, then drain and put them into a tub or pan; the hog being killed, save two quarts of the blood, and stir it till quite cold, when the grits may be mixed with it, still stirring; season it with a large spoonful of salt, cloves, nutmeg, and mace, a quarter of an ounce of each, pounded and dried; flavour it with winter savory, sweet marjoram, thyme, and penny-royal, all chopped small. The next day, cut the leaf [suet] of the hog into dice, cleanse the entrails well, tie them at one end, and begin to fill them, putting in plenty of fat with the other ingredients, fill them about three parts full, tie the other end of the skins, prick and boil them gently for an hour; then take them out, and lay them on clean straw.

—*The Cook's Dictionary and Housekeeper's Directory* (London, 1830), by Richard Dolby

FOOD & WAR

1918: World War I, Armistice Day

The formal German surrender was signed on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month of 1918, in Dining Car No. 2419 of the Orient Express.

ARMISTICE DAY DINNER

1918: London, England

A special dinner was prepared at very short notice at the Carlton Hotel on this day by the famous Auguste Escoffier. The German surrender was signed at eleven a.m. and almost immediately patrons began streaming into the hotel to book a celebratory dinner. Escoffier suddenly found himself with 712 guests to feed, but with very limited wartime supplies. He came up with the following menu:

Dîner au Champagne

Consommé du Père la Victoire

Velouté Renaissance

Mouselline de homard à l'Americaine

Riz à l'Indienne

Petits pâtés de volaille à la Bruxelloise

Mignonettes d'Agneau Sainte-Alliance

Petits pois à l'Anglaise

Pommes de terre Canadiennes

Faisan en cocotte Périgourdine

Salade des Capucins

Coeurs de celery à l'Italienne

Les bombes de réjouissance

Symbole de la paix

Les douces dragées de Verdun libératrices

Friandises

Liqueurs de France, Café mode Orientale

Fine Champagne 1865, Vieille Chartreuse du Couvent

Escoffier's masterpiece was the creation of the *Mignonettes d'agneau Saint-Alliance*. Not having enough of any single type of meat for a main dish for that number of persons, he ground and mixed the available lamb, veal, pork, and chicken, mixed it with twenty kilos of canned foie gras from his stores, ten kilos of bread crumbs, cream, and some chopped truffles. He made the mixture into *petites noisettes* (small patties) and gave them a gloriously patriotic name. Patrons were accustomed to small servings of meat due to the wartime restrictions, and certainly in the prevailing joyous mood, no-one would have thought to complain. The other dishes on the menu were almost certainly the

standard restaurant items, renamed in celebration of the occasion.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

1364: London, Making the Punishment Fit the Crime

A vintner named John Penrose was brought before the Aldermen of the City of London on this day, and convicted of selling “unsound and unwholesome wines, to the deceit of the common people, the contempt of the King, at the shameful disgrace of the officers of the City, and to the grievous damage of the commonality.” He was to be imprisoned “a year and a day, to drink a draught of the bad wine, the rest to be poured over his head, and to forswear the calling of a vintner in the City of London for ever.”

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769: New Zealand

From the *Endeavour* journal of Joseph Banks:

New Zealand. Rain and blowing weather all this day so that no canoes came off nor did we go ashore. An oyster bank had been found at the river by the wooding place, about $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile up on the starboard hand Just above a small Island which is covered at high water; here the longboat was sent and soon returned deep loaded with I sincerely believe as good oysters as ever came from Colchester and about the same size. They were laid down under the booms and employed the ships company very well who I verily think did nothing but Eat from the time they came on board till night.

1811: USA

From the journal of Wilson Price Hunt’s overland expedition in 1811–1812:

On the 11th we found at the water’s edge a trail worn by horses. I chose to follow it rather than again to clamber over rocks. Before long we met two Shoshone Indians who showed me a knife that they had got from some of our companions. One of them led us along a path that took us away from the river; we crossed a prairie and came to the village of his people. The

women fled in such haste that they did not have time to take their children who could not walk, but simply covered them with straw.

The poor little creatures were terrified when I lifted the straw to look at them. Even the men trembled, as though I were some ferocious animal. Nevertheless, they gave us a small amount of dried fish that we found most edible, and they sold us a dog. One of these Indians accompanied us and we soon found the river again. It was lined by their tents. We camped nearby and before long about fifty men came to see us. They were very honest and very obliging. As on the day before, the river course was broken by rapids. (26 miles northwest)

1873: Australia

Peter Egerton-Warburton (1813–1889) explored the center of Australia in 1872-4, and his party became the first to cross the continent from the center to the west, via the Great Sandy Desert.

We killed our last meat on the 20th October; a large bull-camel has therefore fed us for three weeks. It must be remembered that we have no flour, tea, or sugar, neither have we an atom of salt, so we cannot salt our meat. We are seven in all, and are living entirely upon sun-dried slips of meat which are as tasteless and innutritious as a piece of dead bark. Unless the game drops into our hands in great abundance we must kill another camel directly we get to water. Most of us are nearly exhausted from starvation, and our only resource is a camel, which would disappear from before us in a twinkling.

The expedition started with 17 camels. During the journey, four of their camels had bolted, one died of poisoning, three were too exhausted to continue and were left to die in the desert, and seven were killed and eaten.

TYPHOID MARY

1938: USA

Mary Mallon, known as “Typhoid Mary” died on this day. The household cook was a carrier of the typhoid bacillus, which means that she had no symptoms herself, but was capable of transmitting the infection to others. Unfortunately for

the families who employed her, the nature of her occupation made transmission of the bacteria very easy—particularly as she later admitted to not feeling the necessity to wash her hands regularly while cooking. She is held responsible for several serious outbreaks of typhoid in the region, and perhaps as many as fifty deaths. In 1907 she was taken into custody, and placed in quarantine. After three years she was released on condition that she not take up employment as a cook, an instruction that she ignored, as she was adamant that she was not infected. Finally, after an outbreak at a New York Hospital was traced to her, in 1915 she was quarantined again on North Brother Island, where she remained until her death in 1938.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1660: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys: “*Lords day*. This morning I went to Sir W. Battens about going to Deptford tomorrow. And so, eating some hog’s pudding of my Lady’s making, of the hog that I saw a-fattening the other day at her house.”

1711: America

From the diary of William Byrd of Westover, Virginia:

I rose about 7 o’clock and read nothing because I prepared to go home. However I said my prayers and ate some cranberry tart for breakfast. Mr. Graeme came to go home with me and I gave him some Virginia wine. About 10 o’clock we got on our horses and called at Green Springs where we drank tea and then took our leave and proceeded to Frank Lightfoot’s and were conducted there by a dog which we found at the ferry.

NOVEMBER 12

FISHING THE THAMES

1974: London, England

A salmon was caught in the River Thames for the first time in 1974. The salmon

A salmon was caught in the River Thames for the first since 1833. The massive urbanization and industrialization of the nineteenth century took its toll on the Thames. Once upon a time, fish from the Thames was so plentiful that it was considered food for the poor folk, but by 1850 the waters were so polluted the river was no longer capable of supporting marine life. A survey in 1957 showed that there were no fish at all in the river between Richmond and Tilbury. A clean-up operation began in 1960, and became more feasible with the closure of the London docks in 1970.

On 12 November 1974, a live stray salmon from another river was found trapped on the cleaning screens at West Thurrock Power Station. In 1979 the Thames Salmon Re-habilitation Scheme was launched with the goal of eventually restoring a salmon population. Part of the scheme involved the construction of salmon ladders in the upstream, non-tidal stretches of the river, to by-pass the weirs and locks, and facilitate the return of the fish to their breeding grounds each season. The last ladder was officially opened in May 2000.

Overall, the scheme seems to be gaining ground. There have been sustained salmon runs since 1982, although numbers have fluctuated.

FOOD & WAR

1914: World War I

The Norwegian steamer *Thelma* sailed from Philadelphia with over 2,000 tons of food for Belgium, which was suffering severe food shortages due to the German occupation. The Red Cross orchestrated the effort, the vessel was chartered by John Wanamaker, and the money was raised in a campaign conducted by the newspapers of Philadelphia.

FOOD FIRSTS

1794: America

The first written mention of coleslaw appears in the *Massachusetts Spy* of this date: “A piece of sliced cabbage, by Dutchmen ycleped [called] cold slaw.”

The word *coleslaw* derives from the Dutch *koolsalade* (cabbage salad), but the word became mistakenly etymologized by English-speakers into “cold slaw” which

in turn led to the creation of the variation “hot slaw.”

An early recipe for cold slaw appears in Mrs. Sarah Tyson Rorer’s *Philadelphia Cook Book*, published in 1886.

Cold Slaw

1 quart of cut cabbage	2 eggs
½ cup of cream (sour is best)	1 teaspoonful of salt
2 tablespoonfuls of vinegar	A little pepper
Butter the size of a walnut	

Cut the cabbage very fine and put it in an earthen bowl. Put the vinegar on to boil. Beat the eggs till light, add them to the cream and butter. Now add these to the boiling vinegar. Stir over the fire until boiling hot, add the salt and pepper, and pour over the cabbage, and it is ready to serve when very cold.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1811: USA

From the journal of Wilson Price Hunt’s overland expedition in 1811–1812:

On the 12th I visited some tepees where I found a great quantity of salmon. These structures are of straw and are, in form, like stacks of wheat. They are warm and snug. In front of the doorways we saw large piles of sagebrush used for fires. I bought two dogs and we ate one.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1660: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys: “To my father’s, where I found my wife (who hath been with my father today buying of a tablecloth and a dozen of napkins of Diaper, the first that ever I bought in my life.)”

1711: America

From the diary of William Byrd of Westover, Virginia:

I rose about 7 o’clock and said my prayers. Then we ate our breakfast of milk and took our leave and proceeded to Westover, where we found all well, thank God Almighty. Mr. Graeme was pleased with the place exceedingly. I showed him the library and then we walked in the garden till dinner and I ate some wild duck. ..About 8 o’clock my wife was taken with the colic violently but it was soon over. Then Mr. Graeme and I drank a bottle of pressed wine which he liked very well, as he had done the white madeira.

1809: Turkey

From *Lord Byron’s Letters and Journals*:

My dear Mother,—I have now been some time in Turkey. . . . The next day I was introduced to Ali Pacha . . . (the vizier) received me in a large room paved with marble; a fountain was playing in the centre; the apartment was surrounded by scarlet ottomans. He received me standing, a wonderful compliment from a Mussulman, and made me sit down on his right hand. . . . He told me to consider him as a father whilst I was in Turkey, and said he looked on me as his son. Indeed, he treated me like a child, sending me almonds and sugared sherbet, fruit and sweetmeats, twenty times a day.

NOVEMBER 13

COLSTON DAY

England

Sir Edward Colston (1636–1721) was a merchant and Member of Parliament in Bristol, England. He was a great benefactor of the city and endowed several schools and other institutions, and his birthday (November 2 Old Style, so November 13 according to the New Style calendar) is celebrated in the town, especially in the schools that bear his name. On this day the “Colston Bun” was distributed by the Colston Society to children at the school. The bun was made from a sweet, spicy yeast dough containing dried fruit. It was prepared in dinner-plate size, marked in eight wedges, and also an individual “ha’penny starver.”

A BANQUET FOR GENERAL GRANT

1879: USA The Thirteenth Annual Banquet of the Society of the Army of the Tennessee

A banquet was held at the Palmer House, Chicago, on this day in honor of General Ulysses S. Grant, who had recently returned from a world tour. The six hundred guests included Generals Sherman, Sheridan, Logan, Vilas, Woodford and Pope, and Mark Twain, who gave his most famous after-dinner speech, “To the Babies.”

Albert Bigelow Paine, Twain’s biographer wrote, “Chicago has never known a greater event than that dinner, for there has never been a time since when those great soldiers and citizens could have been gathered there.”

Guest ate from a thirteen piece, 24 carat gold trimmed French Haviland bone china dinner setting. Presumably as a nod to the large number of military men present, instead of cracker with the cheese, the menu lists “hard tack.”

MENU

Blue Point Oysters on the Shell.

-

Green Turtle Soup.

-

Boiled California Salmon, Holland Sauce.

Parisienne Potatoes

-

Roast Fillet of Beef, Larded, with Mushrooms.

Croquettes of Potatoes

-

Cutlets of Minced Game

Sweetbreads, with Spinach

Croquettes of Chicken.

-

ROMAN PUNCH

-

Roast Saddle of Venison. Roast Prairie

Buffalo Steaks, Truffle Sauce

Breast of Ducks, Larded, Currant Jelly.

Fillet of Wild Turkey, Cranberry Sauce.

-

Chicken Salad. Shrimp Salad. Celery Salad.

-

Neopolitan Ice Cream. Ices.

Cakes Assorted.

Wine Jellies. Charlotte Russe.

Meringues Assorted. Fruit.

-

Hard Tack.

Roquefort and English Cheese. Celery Salad.

Coffee. Cognac.

Cigars.

Sauterne, Sherry, Claret, Champagne.

A PIG PRODUCTS LUNCHEON

1934: England

The Pig Breeders' Association held a special luncheon on this day. The *Times* advised of the event and the menu the previous day.

To emphasize the merits of British bacon, pork, hams, and the delicacies manufactured from pig products, the National Pig Breeders' Association proposes to invite a number of housewives to a pig products luncheon at Peterborough tomorrow the day before the association's exhibition of pedigree pigs at Peterborough Repository. The luncheon menu will include roast pork, boiled gammon, pork chops, brawns, grilled bacon, pork pies, and many other lesser known table delicacies. The sale of about 160 breeding pigs from many of the best herds in the country aims at making available to the farmer stock from which he can produce the right type of pig for bacon and pork.

SOCIAL FORCES AT WORK

1933: USA

The first sit-down strike in American history was held on this day by workers at the packing plant of George A. Hormel and Company in Austin, Minnesota, the company that developed SPAM™.

Workers had asked for a 10 cent-per hour wage increase, which the company refused to grant. Two and a half thousand workers, newly formed into a union, stormed the Hormel plant and forced supervisors and foremen out of the building. The workers turned off the refrigeration system, putting one million pounds of meat owned by the Federal Government at risk of rapid deterioration, but restored it the following day after an appeal to do so while negotiations got under way.

Although four companies of National Guardsmen were mobilized, the three day strike was without any significant violence or injury, and industrial relations remained stable at Hormel until the great strike of 1985.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1834: Britain

Daniel Rutter Long, a chemist from Bath in Somerset was granted a patent for a process of “Applying anti-putrescent and flavouring substances to meat.” In a process eerily reminiscent of embalming, Long’s method involved injecting saline “by means of a force pump” into the heart or a large blood vessel, as soon as possible after the animal is killed. Stronger saline was used if the intention was to preserve the meat at once, instead of the usual method of salting. Various flavoring substances such as vinegar, spices or “Westphalian liquid”—a smoke flavoring—could be added to the saline.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1678: At Sea

From the diary of Henry Teonge, chaplain aboard H.M. *Assistance*:

Fayre weather, but a crosse wind. This day dined with us the two fyre-ships’ Captaines, and Capt. Petts of the Store ship. Wee had an achbone of good beife and cabidge ; a hinder quarter of mutton and turnips ; a hogg’s head and haslett roasted ; 3 tarts, 3 plates of apples, 2 sorts of excellent cheese: this is our short commons at sea.

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

During the night, a great number of flying-foxes came to revel in the honey of the blossoms of the gum trees. Charley shot three, and we made a late but welcome supper of them. They were not so fat as those we had eaten before, and tasted a little strong; but, in messes made at night, it was always difficult to find out the cause of any particular taste, as Master Brown wished to get as quickly as possible over his work, and was not over particular in cleaning them.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1660: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

So to the Exchequer and there took Spicer and his fellow Clarke to the Dogg taverne and did give them a peck of oysters; and so home to dinner. Where I find my wife making of pyes and tarts to try her oven with (which she hath never yet done); but not knowing the nature of it, did heat it too hot and so did a little overbake her things, but knows how to do better another time.

Household ovens were uncommon in ordinary homes at this time. Most cooking was done over an open fire, and anything requiring baking was sent to the local baker, who, for a fee, cooked it in the remaining heat of his brick oven after the bread was taken out. Pepys' gradually increasing wealth and position is shown in his diary by the entries about his accumulating possessions and household improvements.

1711: America

From the diary of William Byrd of Westover, Virginia:

I rose about 7 o'clock and read nothing because of my company. However I said a short prayer and drank chocolate for breakfast and ate some cake. Then Mr. Graeme and I went out with bows and arrows and shot at

partridge and squirrel . . . About 2 o'clock we went to dinner and I ate some venison pasty and were very merry.

1802–1811: USA

Several entries from the diary of Martha Ballard, was a midwife in Hallowell, Maine. She kept a diary of the confinements she attended, and also made brief notes about day to day household chores, meals, and purchases. Here are several entries for November 14:

1802: Clear. I have been at home, Sorted our Corn & helpt do other work. Sally Church helpt me. I paid her 3/8 pence for the three days Shee has workt here this weak. we had a [Broild] Chicken for Dinner. Dagt [daughter] Ballard partook.

1806: Clear. I have Sorted my apples and put them into ye Seller. mr Ballard went to mr Saml Cuminges, bot a Chees

1807: Snowd forenn, Clear at Evng. I have been at home. Hannah Bald Supt and Spent Evng. Wilm dind here. I Cut apples to drie at Evng. mr Ballard to mr Woodward, Bot [bought] 3 lb Chees & 2 do Butter. mrs W sent me _ lb fresh Pork

1810: Cloudy. mr Ballard to the Sellement, Brot home _ lb Salt, *gln Spirit*, lb Tea, 2 lb Sugar, 1 lb Candles. the Tea, Sugar & Candles had of Son Ephm. Son Jona Calld here, all wel at Clinton

1811: rainy. I have done my hous work, Sorted part of my apples that were in ye Sellar, Pared & Cut the rot out. Hannah Glidon went to Malta, mr Fields with her.

1874

Thomas Payne Judkins and his wife were en route from England to New Zealand aboard the sailing ship *Assaye*. They left on September 1 1874. On 13th November he wrote:

Upon my word, I can forbear no longer to note the cases of imposition, encroachment and roguery, that have come under my notice on this ship. Without going into particulars, I may say that the baker has been making a trade of withholding and concealing bread from the emigrants, as rations, and selling it on the sly to those who were foolish enough to buy it, for 1/6 per loaf of 4 lbs.

QUOTATION FOR THE DAY

Tragic indeed is the current state in which more than 800 million people find themselves due to lack of food or to malnutrition. Every effort must be urgently made to wipe out the scandal of the co-existence of persons who lack the basic essentials with others who have a superabundance.

—Pope John Paul II, *General Audience November 13 1996*

NOVEMBER 14

PROCLAMATION BY THE KING

1619: Britain

King James I of England (James VI of Scotland) issued *A Proclamation for Restraint of Killing, Dressing, and Eating of Flesh in Lent or on fish daies, appointed by the law to be hereafter strictly observed by all sorts of people*. The proclamation was reissued a number of times during James' reign.

A PIONEER SUPPER

1867: USA

A grand game dinner was given this night at the Wilder House, Fort Scott, Kansas, by the "Pioneers of '57," who had also caught most of the major attractions on the menu. The Fort Scott *Monitor* noted that the event was: "A reunion of the old advance guard of civilization and settlement, coupled with a general invitation to all who wished to join them in the festivities of the occasion."

The journalists enthused about the repast offered, saying that it was "a sumptuous one, out-rivaling, as their bill of fare shows, any first-class hotel on the continent."

PIONEER SUPPER.

Wilder House.

Fort Scott, Kansas, Nov. 14, 1867.

BILL OF FARE.

Twelve O'clock Supper.

Soup.

Oyster. Colbert.

FISH.

Baked Black Bass. Broiled Red-horse.

RELIEVE.

Broiled Leg of Mutton, Caper sauce;

Wild Turkey, Braised, with Oysters;

Ham, Champagne Sauce;

Broiled Prairie Chicken, Parsley sauce;

Rib of Antelope, a la Regeance;

Burrato longue.

COLD ORNAMENTAL DISHES.

Chaufroid of Faisant, a la Parisienne.

Pattress de foie Gras, with jelly.

Bastion of Rabbits, a la Shiloh.

Bear Tongue, a la Carlotta.

Boned Turkey, decorated with jelly.

Boned Partridge, a la Pawnee.

Brandt, ornamented with jelly.

Sunfish au Beurre, de Montpellier.

ENTRIES.

Rissoles of Jack Snipe, a la Pompadour.

Fillet of Curlew, a la Rouenaise.

Civit of Venison, with Port wine.

Fillet of Wild Goose, a la Marmaton.

Fillet of Teal Duck, a la Drywood.

Fillet of Plover, a la Prairie.

White Crane Salad, a l'Osage.

Woodcock Fricasee, a la Wolverine.

Noix of Fawn, a la Balltown.

Coon Chops, a la Marais des Cygnes.

- - - - -

Sweetbread, a la Toulouse.

ROASTS.

Beef, Wild Turkey, Killdeer,

Buffalo, Saddle Venison, Gray Squirrel,

Gray Duck, Fox Squirrel, Sage Hen,

Goose, Wood Duck, Crane,

Mallard, Red-head Duck, Black Bear,

Brandt, Canvas-back Duck, Gray Duck,

Opossum, with Persimmon Jelly, Butter-ball Duck.

PASTRY.

Persimmon Pyramid, Cocoanut Pyramid,

American Dessert, Cantelope rum sauce,

Mince Pie, Strawberry Ice Cream,

Dewberry Jelly, Champagne Jelly,

Pumpkin Pie, Pretzels,

Paw-Paw Pie, Horn of Plenty.

DESSERT.

Wild Fox Grapes, Black Walnuts,

Hazel Nuts, Butter Nuts,

Bush Cherries, Paw Paws,

Pecans, Apples,

Coffee.

WINE LIST.

Champagne.

Robinson & Co.'s Dry Verzenay.

J. Sattler & Co.'s Green Seal Imperial.

C. H. Haynes' Royal Rose.

Van Fossen Bros! Gold Seal.

Linn & Stadden's Sillery Mousseaux.

A. McDonald & Bro's. Monopale.

J. S. Redfield & Co.'s Dry Sillery.

Dr. J. H. Couch's Verzenay.

Dr. B. F. Hepler's Cabinet.

J. S. Redfield & Co.'s Imperial.

Claret.

Table, Medoc, Floirac, (D. Marie & Freres and Brandenburg,

Freres), St. Julien, Chateau, Leoville, (first quality)

Chateau Margux, Chateau Yquem, Chateau Lafitte, Chateau Griscoms.

California Wine.

Angelica, Los Angelos Vintage.

California Port, Muscatel and Hock.

Kansas Wine.

Southern Kansas Wine Co.

Imperial, W. T. Campbell's Vintage. Sparkling Catawba,

Spring River Vineyard. H. B. Hart's Seedling "Bergunday."

Still Catawba, (very still, no noise).

Ale and Porter.

Hack's Imported (Leavenworth) Ale.

Newberry's London Porter.

RAILWAY FOOD

1867: USA

The railroad between Utica and Waterville was officially opened on this day. Ten thousand people visited Waterville for the celebrations, many arriving by one of four trains. The president of the railroad, councilors, clergy, and other prominent citizens were given a hearty reception by the people, and all then marched through the principal streets of the town before being entertained at dinner. Three venues were needed to accommodate the guests: Mr. Putnam's new three-story building, his large hop house, and a large tent. The *Waterville Times* described the food:

Among the list of items prepared for and served during the festivities were 11 roast pigs, 30 roast turkeys, 15 roast ducks, 155 roast chickens, 53 quarters roast lamb, 11 roast spare ribs, 22 boiled hams, 10 chicken pies, 52 pans pork and beans, 82 pounds corned beef, 116 pounds butter, 125 pounds roast beef, 272 pounds cheese, 130 pounds coffee, 175 pounds sugar, 9,000 biscuits, 30 loaves bread, 100 mince and apple pies, and 40 bushels of doughnuts.

A beautiful cake, furnished by Mrs. William Osborn, graced the head of one of the tables. Around the outside of the cake were the letters, "U. C. & S. V. R., Nov. 14th, '67." On the top were three miniature locomotives on a circular railway, while the center had a figure representing the Goddess of Liberty,

bearing the American flag. Each engine bore the letters, "U. C. & S. V. R. R." As the cake was the only artistic ornament furnished, it was voted that it should be held in reserve for the next celebration in the village of Sherburne.

AN ALSATION LUNCHEON

1933: London, England

The newly formed Wine and Food Society held its first meeting at the Café Royal. The society, of which André Simon was president, had been organized "to raise the standard of eating and drinking throughout the country." In spite of the stated major concern of the society to study (and presumably enjoy) the good foods of England, the members at the first meeting enjoyed "An Alsation Luncheon."

Les Hors d'oeuvre Alsacien

Le Perdrix aux Choux

Le Fromage de Munster

Le Gougloff de Colmar

Compote de Mirabelles

Café

In addition, three white wines from the Riquwihr district "of the kind which in sunny years is suitable for export" were served.

THE ROYAL WEDDING OF LANDSHUT

1475: Bavaria, Germany

On this day, "George the Rich," Duke of Bavaria-Lanshut was married to Jagwida, the daughter of King Casimir IV of Poland. The wedding festivities lasted eight days, and cost 60,700 florins (equivalent to about \$13 million today.) In 1903, a reenactment was performed, and this has continued annually almost uninterruptedly ever since.

Livestock eaten at the original wedding celebrations included: 320 bullocks, 1,500 sheep, 1,300 lambs, 500 calves, and 40,000 chickens.

FOOD & WAR

1870: Paris, France

From *The Diary of a Besieged Resident* by Henry Labouchere, during the Siege of Paris by Prussia, between September 19, 1870, and January 28, 1871:

Cats have risen in the market—a good fat one now costs twenty francs. Those that remain are exceedingly wild. This morning I had a *salmis* of rats—it was excellent—something between frog and rabbit. I breakfasted with the correspondents of two of your contemporaries. One of them, after a certain amount of hesitation, allowed me to help him to a leg of a rat; after eating it he was as anxious as a terrier for more. The latter, however, scornfully refused to share in the repast.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1617: Guiana

Walter Raleigh landed at Cayenne so ill that he had to be carried ashore after a long and disastrous voyage across the Atlantic. He had lost more than a quarter of his men on his search for the fabled El Dorado. They stayed in the estuary three weeks, during which time he recovered his health, eating pineapples and armadillo brought to them by the indigenous people.

[A]nd with him many of the borderers, with many women and children, that came to wonder at our nation and to bring us down victual, which they did in great plenty, as venison, pork, hens, chickens, fowl, fish, with divers sorts of excellent fruits and roots, and great abundance of pinas, the princess of fruits that grow under the sun, especially those of Guiana. They brought us, also, store of bread and of their wine, and a sort of paraquitos no bigger than wrens, and of all other sorts both small and great. One of them gave me a beast called by the Spaniards armadillo, which they call cassacam, which seemeth to be all barred over with small plates somewhat like to a rhinoceros.

A few days later Raleigh said that they “feasted ourselves with that beast which is called armadillo, presented unto us before at Winicapora.”

1769: Polynesia

From the *Endeavour* Journal of Joseph Banks:

“*Opoorage*” . . . Dr Solander who was today in a cove different from that I was in saw the natives catch many lobsters in a most simple manner: they walkd among the rocks at low water about middle deep in water and still felt about with their feet till they felt one, on which they divd down and constantly brought him up. I do not know whether I have before mentiond these lobsters but we have had them in tolerable plenty in almost every place we have been in and they are certainly the largest and best I have ever eat.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1661: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

At the office all the morning. At noon I went by appointment to the Sun in Fish Street to a dinner of young Mr. Bernard’s for myself, Mr. Phillips, Davenport, Weaver, &c., where we had a most excellent dinner, but a pie of such pleasant variety of good things, as in all my life I never tasted.

1711: America

From the diary of William Byrd of Westover, Virginia:

I rose about 7 o’clock and gave all the necessary orders to my people. I recommended myself and family to God and then ate some cold venison pasty for breakfast . . . then proceeded on our journey . . . went to Colonel Bray’s where the wedding had been kept and found abundance of company there. I dined and ate some chicken pie and then we went to dancing and the bride was my partner but because Colonel Bray was sick we went away before 10 o’clock to the coffeeshouse where I won 5 shillings of the
President

President.

1825: USA

Thomas Jefferson wrote to Ellen Randolph Coolidge (his granddaughter):

Monticello. I want to engage you, as my agent at Boston, for certain articles not to be had here, and for such only. But it will be on the indispensable condition that you keep as rigorous an account of Dollars and cents as old Yerragan our neighbor would do. This alone can induce friends to ask services freely, which would otherwise be the asking of presents and amount to a prohibition. We should be very glad occasionally to get small supplies of the fine dumb codfish to be had at Boston, and also of the tongues and sounds of the Cod. This selection of the articles I trouble you for is not of such as are better there than here; for on that ground we might ask for every thing from thence, but such only as are not to be had here to all. Perhaps I should trespass on Mr. Coolidge for one other article. We pay here 2. D. a gallon for bad French brandy. I think I have seen in Degrand's Price current Marseilles brandy, from Dodge and Oxnard, advertised good at 1. Dollar, and another kind called Seignettes, which I am told is good Cognac at 1.25. D. I will ask of you then a supply of a kental of good dumb fish, and about 20 or 30 lbs. of tongues and sounds; and of Mr. Collidge a 30 gallon cask of Dodge and Oxnard's Marseilles brandy, if tolerable good at 1. D. or thereabouts, but double cased to guard against spoliation. Knowing nothing of the prices of the fish, I will at a venture, desire Col. Peyton to remit 60. D. to Mr. Coolidge immediately, and any little difference between this and actual cost either way, may stand over to your next account. We should be the better perhaps of your recipe for dressing both articles.

NOVEMBER 15

MONASTERY FOOD

1492: England

The published Compotus (accounts) rolls of the obedientiaries of St. Swithun's priory, Winchester, include the Diet Rolls for some time periods. These rolls show what was purchased for the monks' table each day at this time. Bread

show what was purchased for the monks two meals a day at this time. Bread, beer, and vegetables would have been produced at the monastery itself, so are not entered. The diet on November 15 is indicated by the following entry in the accounts:

	s	d
Moile	7	
150 eggs	1	3
Isynge as entrée	1	½
Beef	3	0
Mutton	1	6
Hordarian's entrée	3	

Moile: see January 1.

Isynge (by various spellings) was a sort of pickled salmon.

The previous day, November 14, was a Wednesday, so a meatless day, with much more austere food. The monks ate dry salted fish and eggs for both meals.

	s	d
Drylynge		4

180 eggs	1	6
Oysters as entrée		4
Mustard		1 ½
Brushwood [presumably fuel]	1	8

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1804: Australia

George Caley worked as a collector of botanical and zoological specimens for Sir Joseph Banks. In 1804, he and three others, carrying their supplies and equipment on their backs (the terrain being unsuitable for horses) set off on a three-week expedition to attempt to cross the Blue Mountains. They carried biscuits, flour, rice, portable soup, pork, sugar, and tea, and intended to supplement their rations with what they could find or catch along the way.

On this day, they turned back from the summit of Mt. Banks, where they were faced with the spectacular Grose Gorge. The sight made Caley believe that the mountains “must forever remain an insurmountable barrier to the extension of the settlement,” and, not realizing that he was only 10 kilometers from his goal, and supplies running short, they turned back.

The party had been unsuccessful at hunting, and stayed alive thanks to the portable soup they carried.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1762: Britain

James Boswell, the biographer of Samuel Johnson was journeying from his home in Edinburgh to London, when the chaise in which he was travelling broke a wheel. and he and another passenger were temporarily stranded in Avton.

Never did I pass three hours more unhappily. We were set down in a cold ale-house in a dirty little village. We had a beefsteak ill-dressed and had nothing to drink but thick muddy beer. . . . At last our chaise came, and we got to Berwick about twelve at night. We had a slice of hard dry toast, a bowl of warm negus, and went comfortable to bed.

Negus

This popular beverage derives its name from its originator, Colonel Negus. The ingredients of which it is composed are either port or sherry and hot water, the quantity of the water being double that of the wine. Sweeten with lump sugar, and flavour with a little lemon juice, and grated nutmeg, and a morsel only of the yellow rind of the lemon. It is an improvement to add one drop of essence of ambergris, or eight or ten drops of essence of vanilla to every twelve glasses or so of negus.

—*Cassell's Dictionary of Cookery*, c.1870

1791: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde: “Nancy very busy with the Maids all the Morning in making some Black Puddings &c.”

1924: Oaxaca, Mexico

The novelist D. H. Lawrence and his wife Frieda were in Oaxaca, where they were planning to live. He wrote to his friend Jack Murry from there on this day: “It’s the chief market today—such a babel and a hubbub of unwashed wild people—heaps of roses and hibiscus flowers, blankets, very nice wild pottery, calves, birds, vegetables, and awful things to eat—including squashed fried locust-beetles.”

NOVEMBER 16

DINNER AT THE WHITE HOUSE

1988: Washington

The prime minister of England, Margaret Thatcher, was a guest of President Ronald Reagan at dinner at the White House on this day.

Baby Lobster Bellevue

Caviar Yoghurt Sauce

Curried Croissant

Roasted Saddle of Veal Périgourdine

Jardinière of Vegetables

Asparagus with Hazelnut Butter

Autumn Mixed Salad

Selection of Cheese

Chestnut Marquise

Pistachio Sauce

Orange Tuiles and Ginger Twigs

Saintsbury Chardonnay 1987

Stag's Leap wine Cellars Cabernet Sauvignon 1978

Schramsberg Crémant Demi Sec 1984

A DESIGN FOR A BOTTLE

1915: USA

Alex Samuelson, assignor to the Root Glass Co. of Terre Haute, Indiana, was granted Patent No. 48,160 for his "Design for a Bottle or Similar Article." It was the first prototype of the contour bottle, now indelibly associated with Coca-

Coia.

FOOD & WAR

1939: Britain, World War II

The Prices of Goods Act was introduced to control profiteering under the rationing system. The initiation of the Act was a result of lessons learned in World War I.

The Board of Trade gained the power to freeze prices on a list of specified manufactured goods (which varied from time to time) and any claim for an increase had to be justified by proven increase in costs. A Central Price Regulation Committee oversaw the enforcement of the Act, and local committees investigated complaints from the public. The Act came into force on 1st January 1940, but it proved almost impossible to enforce at the manufacturers level.

AMERICAN COLONIAL HISTORY

1620: Provincetown

Sixteen hungry men led by Captain Myles Standish set off on an exploratory expedition into the interior of their new land.

15th / 16th We marched to the place where we had the corn formerly, which place we called Corn-Hill; and digged, and found the rest, of which we were very glad. We also digged in a place a little further off, and found a bottle of oil. We went to another place, which we had seen before, and digged and found more corn, viz. Two or three baskets full of Indian wheat, and a bag of beans, with a good many of fair wheat ears. Whilst some of us were digging up this, some others found another heap of corn, which they digged up also, so as we had in all about ten bushels, which will serve us sufficiently for seed. And sure it was God's good providence that we found this corn, for else we know not how we should have done, for we knew not how we should find or meet with any Indians, except it be to do us a mischief.

There is a plaque at Corn Hill today which says:

Sixteen pilgrims led by Miles Standish, William Bradford, Stephen Hopkins and

Edward Tilley found the precious indian corn on this spot which they called Corn Hill, November 16th 1620.

And sure it was gods good providence that we found this corn for else we know not how we should have done.

LITERATURE & FOOD

1913: France

The first volume of Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past (À la Recherche du Temps Perdu)* was published. It contains one of the most famous and evocative paragraphs about food in literature, and the powerful memories which can be triggered by fragrance or taste.

Many years had elapsed during which nothing of Combray, save what was comprised in the theatre and the drama of my going to bed there, had any existence for me, when one day in winter, as I came home, my mother, seeing that I was cold, offered me some tea, a thing I did not ordinarily take. I declined at first, and then, for no particular reason, changed my mind. She sent out for one of those short, plump little cakes called 'petites madeleines,' which look as though they had been moulded in the fluted scallop of a pilgrim's shell. And soon, mechanically, weary after a dull day with the prospect of a depressing morrow, I raised to my lips a spoonful of the tea in which I had soaked a morsel of the cake. No sooner had the warm liquid, and the crumbs with it, touched my palate than a shudder ran through my whole body, and I stopped, intent upon the extraordinary changes that were taking place. An exquisite pleasure had invaded my senses, but individual, detached, with no suggestion of its origin. And at once the vicissitudes of life had become indifferent to me, its disasters innocuous, its brevity illusory—this new sensation having had on me the effect which love has of filling me with a precious essence; or rather this essence was not in me, it was myself. I had ceased now to feel mediocre,

accidental, mortal. Whence could it have come to me, this all-powerful joy? I was conscious that it was connected with the taste of tea and cake, but that it infinitely transcended those savours, could not, indeed, be of the same nature as theirs. Whence did it come? What did it signify? How could I seize upon and define it?

WINE HISTORY

1984: Switzerland

The oldest bottle of wine ever sold at auction was a bottle of 1646 imperial Tokay. John Chunko of Princetown, New Jersey, and Jay Walker of Ridgefield, Connecticut, paid 1,250 Swiss Franks for it at Sotheby's in Geneva.

Louis XV called Tokay "The Wine of Kings, the King of Wines."

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1840: Australia

From the journal of Edward John Eyre (1815–1901) of his expedition into the inland of Central Australia:

For some days past, we had been travelling through a country in which the *Mesembryanthemum* grows in the greatest abundance, it was in full fruit, and constituted a favourite and important article of food among the native population; all our party partook of it freely, and found it both a wholesome and an agreeable addition to their fare; when ripe, the fruit is rich, juicy, and sweet, of about the size of a gooseberry. In hot weather it is most grateful and refreshing. I had often tasted this fruit before, but never until now liked it; in fact, I never in any other part of Australia, saw it growing in such abundance, or in so great perfection, as along the western coast. During our stay in camp a native had been sent out to call some of the other natives, and towards evening a good many came up, and were all regularly introduced to us by 'Wilgully' and the others, who had been with us so long; I gave them a feast of rice which they appeared to enjoy greatly. Our more immediate friends and guides had learnt to drink tea, and eat meat and damper, with which we supplied them liberally, in return for the valuable services they rendered us

services they rendered us.

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

My companions had, for several days past, gathered the unripe fruits of *Coniogeton arborescens*, Br.; which, when boiled, imparted an agreeable acidity to the water, and when thus prepared tasted tolerable well. When ripe, they became sweet and pulpy, like gooseberries, although their rind was not very thick. This resemblance induced us to call the tree "The little Gooseberry tree."

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1665: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

Up, and fitted myself for my Journey down to the Fleete . . . to the Hold of the India Shipp, and there did show me the greatest wealth lie in confusion that a man can see in the world—pepper scatter(ed) through every chink—whole rooms full—and silk in bales, and boxes of Copperplate.

1711: America

From the diary of William Byrd of Westover, Virginia:

I rose about 7 o'clock and read two chapters in Hebrew and some Greek in Homer. I said my prayers and ate boiled milk for breakfast. . . . About 2 o'clock we dined at Marot's and I ate some fish for dinner. . . . About 4 o'clock Jimmy Burwell and I resolved to go to the wedding at Mr. Ingles' and went away in his coach and found all the company ready to go to supper but we ate nothing with them but some custard.

NOVEMBER 17

A BANQUET TO THE RUSSIAN SQUADRON

1863: San Francisco

A ball and banquet organized by the City Guard, the oldest militia in the State, to Admiral Popoff and thirty-five officers of the Russian fleet, took place on this night. Attendance was by invitation only, and the wealthy and prominent members of the city paid \$100 a ticket for the privilege. It was indeed a spectacular affair. The spectacle was apparently “one of the most gorgeous ever witnessed in a San Francisco ballroom” at which “the rich costumes of the ladies were outshone by the gorgeous naval and military uniforms.” The music and dancing were followed by supper between 10 pm and 5 am, and what a supper it was! The bill of fare comprised the best of everything that could be obtained and featured dishes named to appeal to the patriotic sentiments of both nations.

FISH.

Raw Oysters. Pickled oysters.

Fried oysters. Oyster pates.

RELEVES.

Vol-au-vent a la Financiere au vin Champagne,

Terrapins au vin de Madeira,

Westphalia Hams, au vin Champagne.

COLD ORNAMENTED DISHES.

Pâtés de Foie Gras Suisse,

Boned Turkey aux Truffles,

Smoked Tongues, iced and jellied.

ROAST.

Turkeys stuffed with truffle sauce,
Capons, Madeira wine sauce,
Canvas Back Ducks, with Russian cranberry sauce.
Geese a la California.

GAME.

Young Pigeons stuffed. Champagne sauce,
Quails a la Maitre d'Hotel,
Becassin a la Bordellaise,
English Snipes, larded and broiled,
Teal Duck, broiled.

RELISHES.

Chicken Salad, a la Mayonnaise,
Lobster Salad, decorated,
Anchovy Salad,
Salad, Italian style,
Russian Caviar,
Sausages,
Pickles,
Sardines,
Olives, *etc.*

PASTRY AND ICES.

Charlotte Russe, Madeira Jelly

Fruit Jelly, Maraschino Jelly,

Meringues a la crème, Macaroons,

Ram Jelly, Orange Jelly,

Vanilla Ice Cream, Roman Punch,

Coconut Cakes, Ladies' Fingers,

Lemon Ice Cream, Strawberry Ice Cream,

Meringues a la Comfiture, Pine Apple Cream,

Loyal Kisses, Union Drops,

Russian Jelly,

Lafayette, Citron, Sponge, Wine, and Fruit Cakes, Mottoes, *etc.*

FRUITS.

Strawberries with cream, white grapes, Los Angeles grapes, Isabella grapes, pears, peaches, plums, apples, etc., and preserved fruits in endless variety.

ORNAMENTAL PIECES.

Temple representative of the alliance between Russian and America,
ornamented with national flags.

Temple of Liberty. Marine Trophy.

Russian Man-of-war.

Trophy of War. California.

The Kremlin, Moscow.

A Castle of Ice.

Pyramids of coconut, orange, nougari, preserved fruits, *etc.*

Coffee and tea.

Lafayette Cake.

Beat the whites of six eggs to a high froth; beat up the yolks with half a pound of sugar; add half a pound flour, and flavour with lemon; bake in a tin pan with straight sides; when cold, cut into slices about a quarter of an inch thick, spread each with jelly or jam; put three or four slices together for each cake. Or, put them all together, and ice the cake prettily.

—*Peterson Magazine*, Vol 37-38 (1860)

THE PRICE OF MEAT IN KANSAS

1876:USA

The *Kansas City Times* commented on meat prices in the city: “Fine fresh venison sells at 8c per lb. and prime roasts of beef or beefsteak and pork sausage at the same price at the packing house. This is a blessing the people of Kansas City do not fully appreciate.”

FOUNDLING HOSPITAL DIET

1747: London, England

The diet for the children resident in the Foundling Hospital was laid down on this day. The food served depended on the day of the week and whether it was “Pork Season” or “other Season.”

Breakfast Gruell, Milk Porridge, or Broth

Pork (or Beef or Mutton) three days a week, and the other days

Dinner either “Rice Milk”, “Dumplings”, “Hasty Puddings”, or “Sewett Puddings”

Supper Bread and Cheese (2 days), Bread and Milk (2 days), or Bread (3 days)

There were no vegetables at all included for the children, although these were added in 1762 in the form of Greens, Potatoes or Parsnips, Herbs and Roots.

See October 17.

FOOD & WAR

1862: American Civil War

General Robert E Lee wrote on this day to Governor George Randolph of Virginia (and secretary of war of the CSA) about the food supply for the army.

The future supply of subsistence for the army is to me a source of great anxiety. I have endeavored all in my power to economize that which now exists, and to provide for future wants. While in the valley, the complaints of the officers of an insufficient supply of food for the troops became so general that after consultation with the Chief of Commissary of the army I increased the ration of flour to 1 ½ pounds and of beef to 1 ¼ pounds. At that time we were using four ground in the valley and collecting a quantity of beef on the hoof. No other part of the ration could be furnished to the men except salt, nor could the men increase their fare by the purchase of bread, vegetables, *etc.* Their whole ration consisted of meat and bread. It was stated that one great cause of straggling was the insufficiency of the ration to appease the hunger of the men.

See August 10.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1811: USA

From the journal of Wilson Price Hunt's overland expedition in 1811–1812:

As we approached the mountains, we had only some parched corn and the remnants of our meat to keep ourselves alive. Fortunately, on the 17th I traded an old kettle for a horse, though the Indians showed no interest in anything else that we were carrying. I also got two dogs. The countryside was bare of woods and even the sagebrush had disappeared. We camped beside the river. (35 miles northwest)

1844: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

Palm Tree Creek. *Atriplex* [saltbush] forms, when young, as we gratefully experienced, an excellent vegetable, as do the young shoots of *Sonchus* [thistle.] The tops of the *Corypha* palm eat well, either baked in hot ashes or raw, and, although very indigestible, did not prove injurious to health when eaten in small quantities.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1663: London, England

From the Diary of Samuel Pepys. He is chronically “costive” (constipated).

So home, Mr. Hollyard [apothecary?] being come. I had great discourse with him about my disease. He tells me again that I must eat in a morning some loosening grewell [gruel]; and at night roasted apples. That I must drink now and then ale with my wine, and eat bread and butter and honey—and rye bread if I can endure it, it being loosening.

1798: England

Jane Austen in a letter to her sister Cassandra: “I am very fond of experimental housekeeping, such as having an ox-cheek now and then, I shall have one next week, and I mean to have some little dumplings put into it, that I may fancy myself at Godmersham.”

1813

From *Lord Byron's Letters and Journals*. His entry on this day is strong evidence of his eating disorder.

I have dined regularly to-day, for the first time since Sunday last—this being Sabbath, too: All the rest, tea and dry biscuits—six *per diem*. I wish to God I had not dined now!—It kills me with heaviness, stupor, and horrible dreams;—and yet it was but a pint of bucellas [Portuguese wine], and fish. Meat I never touch,—nor much vegetable diet. I wish I were in the country, to take exercise,—instead of being obliged to *cool* by abstinence, in lieu of it. I should not so much mind a little accession of flesh,—my bones can well bear it. But the worst is, the devil always came with it,—till I starved him out,—and I will *not* be the slave of *any* appetite. If I do err, it shall be my heart, at least, that heralds the way. Oh, my head—how it aches?—the horrors of digestion! I wonder how Buonaparte's dinner agrees with him?

1851: USA

Herman Melville wrote in a letter: “If I have done the hardest possible day's work, and then come to sit down in a corner and eat my supper comfortably—why, then I don't think I deserve any reward for my hard day's work—for am I not now at peace? Is not my supper good?”

1832: England

The well-known gourmet cleric Reverend Sydney Smith's famous “Receipt for a Salad” was sent in a letter to his friend, the Reverend Richard Harris Barham, the author of *The Ingoldsby Legends* (1837) after they had dined together. Barham's Memoir describes the circumstances: “Nov. 17, 1832.—Dined with Mr. Smith, He told me of the motto he had proposed for Bishop B—'s arms, in allusion to his brother, the well-known fish-sauce projector, ‘*Gravi jampridem saucia cura.*’”

In a few days afterwards, Mr. Barham received the following invaluable recipe; it was forwarded by post without signature or comment of any kind.

A RECEIPT FOR SALAD

Two large potatoes passed through kitchen sieve,
Unwonted softness to the salad give;
Of ardent mustard add a single spoon,
Distrust the condiment which bites so soon;
But deem it not, thou man of herbs, a fault
To add a double quantity of salt;
Three times the spoon with oil of Lucca crown,
And once with vinegar, procured from town,
True flavour needs it, and your poet begs
The pounded yellow of two well-boiled eggs;
Let onion atoms lurk within the bowl,
And, scarce suspected, animate the whole;
And, lastly, on the flavoured compound toss
A magic teaspoon of anchovy sauce.
Then, though green turtle fail, though venison's tough,
And ham and turkey are not boiled enough,
Serenely full, the epicure may say,—
“Fate cannot harm me,—I have dined to-day.”

N.B.—As this salad is the result of great experience and reflection, it is to be hoped young salad-makers will not attempt any improvements upon it.

NOVEMBER 18

WINE HISTORY

1251: England

King Henry III sent an order for wine to be sent to his spicer-apothecary Robert de Montpellier (Robert de Monte Pessulano) in time for him to blend some special drinks in time for the Christmas celebrations at York.

We hereby command you the keepers of our wines at York, that of the best wines in your custody, you deliver to Robert de Monte Pessulano two tons of white wine to make garhiosilac and one ton of red wine to make claret for our own use at the approaching feast of Christmas. We command also the said Robert to go with all speed to York, to make the said garhiosilac and claret, as he used to do in former years.

Garhiosilac or *gariophillum* references *giroffle*, or cloves. Cloves would have been infused in the wine, perhaps with other herbs and spices to make a beverage which probably had medicinal qualities attributed to it. Perhaps it was served hot, as a form of mulled wine—which would have been very welcome in a cold draughty castle in the north of England winter.

The order also demonstrates the changed meaning of *claret*. The word comes from the French *clair* meaning clear, and in Henry III's time this wine was a yellowish or light red color, and/or a blend of red and white wine, mixed with honey and spices. After 1660 the word increasingly became associated with red wine only, and by the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century a much deeper red wine. Nowadays it is usually specifically applied to red wine from the Bordeaux region.

EGGS à la NABOCOQUE

1972

The following recipe was found amongst the writer Vladimir Nabokov's papers after his death. It was handwritten by Nabokov himself, and dated November 18, 1972. It is believed that it was written in response to a request from Maxime de la Falaise, a fashion model turned food writer and *Vogue* magazine columnist.

Eggs à la Naboccoque

Boil water in a saucepan (bubbles mean it is boiling!). Take two eggs (for one person) out of the refrigerator. Hold them under the hot tap water to make them ready for what awaits them.

Place each in a pan, one after the other, and let them slip soundlessly into the (boiling) water. Consult your wristwatch. Stand over them with a spoon preventing them (they are apt to roll) from knocking against the damned side of the pan.

If, however, an egg cracks in the water (now bubbling like mad) and starts to disgorge a cloud of white stuff like a medium in an old-fashioned seance, fish it out and throw it away. Take another and be more careful.

After 200 seconds have passed, or, say, 240 (taking interruptions into account), start scooping the eggs out. Place them, round end up, in two egg cups. With a small spoon tap-tap in a circle and then pry open the lid of the shell. Have some salt and buttered bread (white) ready. Eat.

V.N.

DINNER WITH DICKENS

1837: London, England

Charles Dickens held a small dinner party to celebrate the completion of *Pickwick Papers* (the novel was originally released in regular installments). Dickens's invitation to his friend William Charles Mcready read:

There is a semi-business, semi-pleasure little dinner which I intend to give at the "Prince of Wales" in Leicester Place, Leicester Square, on Saturday, five for half-past precisely, at which Talfourd, Forster, Ainsworth, Jerdan, and the publishers will be present. It is to celebrate (that is too great a word, but I can think of no better) the conclusion of my *Pickwick* labours; and so I intend, before you take that roll upon the grass you spoke of, to beg your acceptance of one of the first complete copies of the work. I shall be much delighted if you will join us.

William Harrison Ainsworth, also a friend of Dickens, wrote:

WILLIAM HARRISON AINSWORTH, ALSO A FRIEND OF DICKENS, WROTE.

We had a capital dinner, with capital wine and capital speeches. Just before he [Dickens] was about to propose THE toast of the evening the headwaiter . . . entered, and placed a glittering temple of confectionery on the table, beneath the canopy of which stood a little figure of the illustrious Mr. Pickwick. This was the work of the landlord. As you may suppose, it was received with great applause.

WILLIAM TELL AND THE APPLE

1307: Switzerland

This is the day on which the legendary folk hero William Tell is said to have shot the apple from his son Walter's head with a crossbow. Tell had defied the local overlord Albrecht Gessler by refusing to bow to Gessler's hat as instructed. Gessler was enraged, and knowing of Tell's reputation as a superb marksman, ordered that he and his son would both be executed unless Tell could shoot an apple from his son's head from a distance of 80 paces. Tell removed two bolts from his quiver. He successfully shot the apple, leaving his son unscathed. Before releasing him, Gessler asked him why he had prepared two bolts, to which Tell said, "Because, if the first arrow had missed the apple, and had slain my son, you would have found that the second would have gone true to your heart."

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1811: USA

From the journal of Wilson Price Hunt's overland expedition in 1811–1812:
"We put our baggage on the horse. We had only a quart of grain and a small piece of fat for each person . . . we continued our trail to the northwest, along the river banks. (30 miles)"

1835: Tahiti

From Charles Darwin's journal of the voyage of the *Beagle*:

Shaded by a ledge of rock, beneath a facade of columnar lava, we ate our

dinner. My guides had already procured a dish of small fish and freshwater prawns. . . . In the evening we reached a flat little spot on the banks of the same stream. . . . The Tahitians having made a small fire of sticks, placed a score of stones, of about the size of cricket-balls, on the burning wood. In about ten minutes the sticks were consumed, and the stones hot. They had previously folded up in small parcels of leaves, pieces of beef, fish, ripe and unripe bananas, and the tops of the wild arum. These green parcels were laid in a layer between two layers of the hot stones, and the whole then covered up with earth, so that no smoke or steam could escape. In about a quarter of an hour, the whole was most deliciously cooked. The choice green parcels were now laid on a cloth of banana leaves, and with a coconut shell we drank the cool water of the running stream; and thus we enjoyed our rustic meal.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1711: America

From the diary of William Byrd of Westover, Virginia:

I rose about 7 o'clock and read two chapters in Hebrew and some Greek in Homer. I said my prayers and ate boiled milk for breakfast. About 11 o'clock the President called upon me with his coach to go to church where Mr. Paxton gave us a sermon that was very good. After church Colonel Duke and I dined with the Commissary and I ate roast turkey for dinner.

1855: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau: "These apples which I get nowadays—russets and Baldwins—are the ripest of all, being acted on by the frost and partly left because they were slightly overripe for keeping. I come home with a heavy bagful and rob no one."

NOVEMBER 19

FOOD & THE LAW

1379: London, England

A Proclamation was made on Friday, the 19th day of November, in the 2nd year of the reign of King Richard the Second which regulated the butchery trade in the city of London.

It is ordered that no person coming to the City with lambs to sell, shall sell the same at a higher price than the best lamb for 6*d.*, between now and the beginning of Lent; and that no one of the City, or other person wont to sell flesh-meat within the City, shall go into the country to buy lambs; but only those [are to bring them], to whom the said lambs belong; on pain of losing the same, whosoever shall be convicted thereof.

Also,—it is ordered that all butchers, as well freemen as foreigners, who are wont to sell flesh-meat within the City, shall close their shops in the day, before the time for candles being lighted; and that they shall sell no meat by light of candle, but by clear daylight only; on pain of losing to the extent that they shall be convicted of acting to the contrary hereof.

POTLUCK, 1618 STYLE

1618: Newmarket, England

A novel celebration of the birthday of Prince Charles (the future Charles I) was arranged by some of his contemporaries. Sir Philip Mainwaring described the arrangements for the food in a letter to Lord Arundel a few days later.

The Prince his birthday hath beene solemnized here [Newmarket] by those few Marquies and Lords which found themselves here, and to supplie the want of the Lords, Knights and Squires were admitted to a consultation, wherein it was resolved that such a member should meete at Gamiges, and bring every man his dish of meate. It was left to their own choyces what to bring: some strove to be substantiall, some curios, and some extravagant. Sir George Goring's invention bore away the bell: and that was foure huge brawny pigs, pipeing hot; bitted and harnised with ropes of sarsidge [sausage] all tyede to a monstrous bag-pudding.

The even clearly piqued a lot of interest: Another letter about this curious catering arrangement was written a few days later by Mr. Chamberlain to Sir

Dudley Carleton.

We hear nothing from Newmarket, but that they devise all the means they can to make themselves merry; as of late there was a feast appointed at a farmhouse not far off, whither every man should bring his dish. The King brought a great chine of beef, the Marquis of Hamilton four pigs encircled with sausages, the Earl of Southampton two turkies, another six partridges, and one a whole tray full of buttered eggs; and all passed off very pleasantly.

To Butter Eggs with Cream

Take to a dozen of Eggs a pint of Cream; beat them well together, and put three quarters of a pound of Butter to them, and so set them on the fire to harden, and stir them, till they are as hard, as you would have them.

—*The Closet of Sir Kenelm Digby Knight, Opened* (1669)

AN OLYMPIC LUNCHEON

1956: Melbourne, Australia

The Olympic Organizing Committee met over a formal luncheon at the Menzies Hotel on this day.

Canapés Riche

Cream of Asparagus soup

Fillet of Sole Meuniere

Chicken Maryland

Bombe Henri

Welsh Rarebit

Coffee

DINING ABOARD A PORTUGUESE MAN O'WAR

1759

The author of *Letters from Portugal, Spain, Italy and Germany in the years 1759, 1760, and 1761* (Christopher Hervey) described a meal aboard a Portuguese Man o'War in Port St Mary's on this day.

Dinner was at last ready, and we went downstairs to the second cabin. . . . Across this room was laid a great long table the whole breadth of the ship, which was covered as full as ever it could hold with victuals. By victuals I mean cookery, for few of us, I believe, could tell with what compositions the plates were filled. I had, indeed, been in Portugal, but as I had lived always in an English family, I was but little used to their ways of dressing meats. The captain sat in the middle of the table, facing the entrance, and the governor at his right hand. I was placed at the right hand of him. Before us stook a dish which caused much speculation, but proved to be a sort of pudding. It would be endless if I was to give you a description of all we had, for the great table was twice covered with provisions, besides a desert of fruits and sweetmeats, which were thickly flowed as the previous courses. As last in came the water glasses to wash our hands. This is not a Portuguese custom, but as the captain had observed it at the governor's, he thought it would be polite to put the same into execution at his own table, which accordingly he did, but with this difference, that as with us the water was served up in proper tumblers, the honest captain not having any of them I suppose, thought little wine glasses would do as well. And so, indeed they did, but they were attended with the following inconvenience. As the servant handed about the glasses with great pomp, and as we in England, especially at some great tables, are accustomed to have a glass of famous white wine given us after dinner, and officer thinking what was offered to him to be some such thing, drank off half a glass before he discovered his mistake, to our no small diversion.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and

central Australia: "I appeased my craving hunger, which had been well tried for twenty hours, on the small fruit of a species of *Acmena* which grew near the rocks that bounded the sandy flats, until my companions brought my share of stewed green hide."

1835: Tahiti

From Charles Darwin's journal of the voyage of the *Beagle*. The previous day (see) he had dinner prepared in the traditional Tahitian way.

At daylight my friends, after their morning prayer, prepared an excellent breakfast in the same manner as in the evening. They themselves certainly partook of it largely; indeed I never saw any men eat near so much. I suppose such enormously capacious stomachs must be the effect of a large part of their diet consisting of fruit and vegetables, which contain, in a given bulk, a comparatively small portion of nutriment.

NOVEMBER 20

THE PUDDING-PIE FAIR

Deddington, Oxfordshire, England

In the fourteenth century an annual fair was held in the market place of Deddington on Martinmas (November 11), but by the 1930s had moved to this date. This was one of the traditional times of year for great fairs to be held. Much business was transacted at the fairs, including the hiring of servants and laborers, and naturally fun and food were to be had too.

A traditional treat made for the fair was the Deddington "pudden-pie." The method of making these was described in *Notes & Queries* in 1869:

[The pies] are made by setting up a crust composed of flour mixed with milk or water, and mutton suet melted and poured into it hot. These crusts, which are set up like meat-pie crusts, are then placed in the sun for a day or two to stiffen. They vary in size from about three to four inches in diameter, and are about one inch deep. When thoroughly hard they are filled with the same materials as plum puddings are made of, and when baked are sold at twopenny, threepenny and fourpenny each

two pence, three pence and four pence each.

The method of making the crusts is the same as that of making the medieval pastry-case called a “coffin.” The hardness of the crusts generated some local jokes: “They say you could tie a label to one and send it through the post a hundred miles—so hard it was.”

QUEEN VICTORIA’S HOTEL DINNER

1891: Scotland

Queen Victoria stopped at Perth railway station to dine at the Station Hotel en route to her private residence, Balmoral Castle. Unfortunately there is no record of her response to the hotel dinner. The menu was:

Consomme Scotch Broth

Turbot—Lobster Sauce

Fried Fillets of Sole

Mutton Cutlets Braised Fillet of Beef

Roast Chicken

Pheasant Partridge

Savarin Pudding

Madeira Jelly Stewed Pears

Pastry

Dessert

A ROYAL WEDDING

1947: London, England

The marriage of Princess Elizabeth (the future Queen Elizabeth II) and Prince

Phillip took place on this day. Rationing was still in place in Britain, even though the war had ended, and the wedding breakfast at Buckingham Palace was quite simple.

Filet de Sole Mountbatten

-

Perdreau en Casserole

Haricots Verts Pommes Noisette

Salade Royale

-

Bombe Glace Princesse Elizabeth

Friandises

-

Dessert

-

Café

The official Wedding Cake was made by McVitie and Price Ltd using ingredients given as a wedding gift by Australian Girl Guides. Pieces of the cake were subsequently sent to the 15 hospitals, schools and charities of which Princess Elizabeth was then patron or president, and also to Girl Guides and Sea Rangers.

Many other cakes and food gifts had been donated from people all over the world. Over the next ten months or so, these goods were parceled up and distributed to needy widows and pensioners.

FOOD & THE LAW

1959: USA

In the *Federal Register* of November 20, 1959 (24 FR 9368) the FDA amended and clarified the regulations relating to foods and ingredients used prior to 1958. A list was provided of foods that are ‘generally recognized as safe’ (GRAS.) These foods did not have to undergo the usual tests and analysis of newer products.

[It] is impracticable to list all substances that are generally recognized as safe for their intended use. However, by way of illustration, the Commissioner regards such common food ingredients as salt, pepper, vinegar, baking powder, and monosodium glutamate as safe for their intended use.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1911: Antarctica

Roald Amundsen was on the last leg of his journey to the South Pole (they arrived on December 14).

We stopped right under Mount Engelstad in a warm and sunny place, and allowed ourselves on this occasion a little lunch, an indulgence that had not hitherto been permitted. The cooking-case was taken out, and soon the Primus was humming in a way that told us it would not be long before the chocolate was ready. It was a heavenly treat, that drink. We had all walked ourselves warm, and our throats were as dry as tinder. The contents of the pot were served round by the cook—Hanssen. It was no use asking him to share alike; he could not be persuaded to take more than half of what was due to him—the rest he had to divide among his comrades. The drink he had prepared this time was what he called chocolate, but I had some difficulty in believing him. He was economical, was Hanssen, and permitted no extravagance; that could be seen very well by his chocolate. Well, after all, to people who were accustomed to regard “bread and water” as a luxury, it tasted, as I have said, heavenly. It was the liquid part of the lunch that was served extra; if anyone wanted something to eat, he had to provide it himself—nothing was offered him.

. . . It was difficult to find a place for the tent, so hard was the snow up here.

We found one, however, and set the tent. Sleeping-bags and kit-bags were handed in to me, as usual, through the tent-door, and I arranged everything inside. The cooking-case and the necessary provisions for that evening and the next morning were also passed in; but the part of my work that went more quickly than usual that night was getting the Primus started, and pumping it up to high-pressure. I was hoping thereby to produce enough noise to deaden the shots that I knew would soon be heard—twenty-four of our brave companions and faithful helpers were marked out for death. It was hard—but it had to be so. We had agreed to shrink from nothing in order to reach our goal. Each man was to kill his own dogs to the number that had been fixed.

The pemmican was cooked remarkably quickly that evening, and I believe I was unusually industrious in stirring it. There went the first shot—I am not a nervous man, but I must admit that I gave a start. Shot now followed upon shot—they had an uncanny sound over the great plain. A trusty servant lost his life each time. It was long before the first man reported that he had finished; they were all to open their dogs, and take out the entrails to prevent the meat being contaminated. The entrails were for the most part devoured warm on the spot by the victims' comrades, so voracious were they all. Suggen, one of Wisting's dogs, was especially eager for warm entrails; after enjoying this luxury, he could be seen staggering about in a quite misshapen condition. Many of the dogs would not touch them at first, but their appetite came after a while.

The holiday humour that ought to have prevailed in the tent that evening—our first on the plateau—did not make its appearance; there was depression and sadness in the air—we had grown so fond of our dogs. The place was named the "Butcher's Shop." It had been arranged that we should stop here two days to rest and eat dog. There was more than one among us who at first would not hear of taking any part in this feast; but as time went by, and appetites became sharper, this view underwent a change, until, during the last few days before reaching the Butcher's Shop, we all thought and talked of nothing but dog cutlets, dog steaks, and the like. But on this first evening we put a restraint on ourselves; we thought we could not fall upon our four-footed friends and devour them before they had had time to grow cold.

1844: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

One of our bullocks had torn one of the flour-bags, and about fifteen pounds of flour were scattered over the ground. We all set to work, to scrape as much of it up as we could, using the dry gum leaves as spoons to collect it; and, when it got too dirty to mix again with our flour, rather than leave so much behind, we collected about six pounds of it well mixed with dried leaves and dust, and of this we made a porridge,—a mess which, with the addition of some gelatine, every one of us enjoyed highly.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1663: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys: “By and by to the Exchange, and there met by agreement Mr. Howe, and took him with a barrel of oysters home to dinner, where we were very merry, and indeed I observe him to be a very hopeful young man, but only a little conceited.”

1782: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde: “We had for Dinner to day one Fowl boiled and Piggs Face, a Couple of Rabbitts smothered with Onions, a Piece of rost Beef and some Grape Tarts.”

1825: Ireland

From the journal of Sir Walter Scott:

I was in Ireland last summer, and had a most delightful tour. It cost me upwards of £500, including £100 left with Walter and Jane, for we travelled a large party and in style. There is much less exaggerated about the Irish than is to be expected. Their poverty is not exaggerated. . . . Then for their food, they have only potatoes, and too few of them. Yet the men look stout and healthy, the women buxom and well-coloured.

1961: Australia.

The Australian writer Patrick White wrote to Peggy Garland on this day:

Since I began, the famous dinner with Stravinsky has taken palce . . . he is a dear old thing, but very old, tiny and arthritic. . . . Stravinsky and I sat together at dinner. He told me: "I am a professional drunkard. All the time I drink whisky, whisky, whisky!" I must say he held it very well. During dessert he passed me shelled walnuts on the palm of his very soft hand. Lots of rings.

NOVEMBER 21

FESTA DELLA SALUTE

Venice, Italy

The church of Santa Maria della Salute was built as a thanksgiving offering for the end of the plague of 1630 which killed 150,000 Venetians. It was finally finished in 1682, and every year a celebration is held on this day. A procession, led by the Patriarch, that leaves St. Mark's and crosses a pontoon bridge across the Grand Canal to the Salute Church. In the square in front of the church, stalls sell sweets, and candles. The traditional Venetian meal on this day is *castradina* (mutton) and cabbage.

THE END OF TWINKIES

2012: USA

U.S. Bankruptcy Court Judge Robert Drain approved Hostess Brand's request to shutdown, causing fans of the iconic product to fear the end of the production of Twinkies. There was an immediate run on the products remaining on the shelves, and desperate consumers bought up their favorite cake snack at inflated prices via online auction sites.

Twinkies, Wonder Bread, Ho-Hos, and some of the company's other popular products survived, however. In March 2013 it was announced that private equity firms Apollo Global Management (APO) and Metropoulos & Co. had won the bid to take over marketing the products.

FOOD & WAR

1942: Britain, World War II

The first “Kitchen Front” radio broadcast took place on this day. The script for the Saturday morning program was prepared by the Ministry of Food, and was to give advice on how to manage under rationing. Ordinary housewives from around the country were chosen as presenters, in order to enhance the propaganda aspects by providing a range of accents. The first week belonged to Morfydd (Molly) Jeffreys from Swansea in Wales was the first. Molly was to read the script exactly as it was written, and this is the recipe given on the day.

Now dinner. Cawl is ever popular in Wales for the midday meal. Here is my method for making it.

- ½ d. worth of boiling beef
- 3 lbs. potatoes.
- 4 chopped leeks
- 3 tablespoons chopped parsley
- seasoning
- 3 pints water.

Put the meat in water with seasoning and chopped leeks. Bring to the boil and then simmer for $\frac{3}{4}$ hour. Five minutes before serving add parsley and 2 tablespoons of oatmeal to thicken. Prepare and boil potatoes separately. Serve cawl in soup dishes with dry bread, and follow with potatoes and meat.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1844: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt’s journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

Iguanas, opossums, and birds of all kinds, had for some time past, been most gladly consigned to our cooking pot, neither good, bad, nor indifferent being rejected. The dried kangaroo meat, one of our luxuries, differed very little in flavour from the beef, and after long stewing afforded us an excellent broth, to which we generally added a little flour. It is remarkable how soon man becomes indifferent to the niceties of food; and when all the artificial wants of society have dropped off, the bare necessities of life form the only object of his desires.

1911: Antarctica

Roald Amundsen was on the last leg of his journey to the South Pole:

It was calm when we turned out, but the weather did not look altogether promising; it was overcast and threatening. We occupied the forenoon in flaying a number of dogs. As I have said, all the survivors were not yet in a mood for dog's flesh, and it therefore had to be served in the most enticing form. When flayed and cut up, it went down readily all along the line; even the most fastidious then overcame their scruples. But with the skin on we should not have been able to persuade them all to eat that morning; probably this distaste was due to the smell clinging to the skins, and I must admit that it was not appetizing. The meat itself, as it lay there cut up, looked well enough, in all conscience; no butcher's shop could have exhibited a finer sight than we showed after flaying and cutting up ten dogs. Great masses of beautiful fresh, red meat, with quantities of the most tempting fat, lay spread over the snow. The dogs went round and sniffed at it. Some helped themselves to a piece; others were digesting. We men had picked out what we thought was the youngest and tenderest one for ourselves. The whole arrangement was left to Wisting, both the selection and the preparation of the cutlets. His choice fell upon Rex, a beautiful little animal—one of his own dogs, by the way. With the skill of an expert, he hacked and cut away what he considered would be sufficient for a meal. I could not take my eyes off his work; the delicate little cutlets had an absolutely hypnotizing effect as they were spread out one by one over the snow. They recalled memories of old days, when no doubt a dog cutlet would have been less tempting than now—memories of dishes on which the cutlets were elegantly arranged side by side, with paper frills on the bones, and a neat pile of petits pois in the middle. Ah, my thoughts wandered still farther afield—but that does not concern us now, nor has it anything to do

with the South Pole.

I was aroused from my musings by Wisting digging his axe into the snow as a sign that his work was done, after which he picked up the cutlets, and went into the tent. The clouds had dispersed somewhat, and from time to time the sun appeared, though not in its most genial aspect. We succeeded in catching it just in time to get our latitude determined—85° 36' S. We were lucky, as not long after the wind got up from the east-south-east, and, before we knew what was happening, everything was in a cloud of snow. But now we snapped our fingers at the weather; what difference did it make to us if the wind howled in the guy-ropes and the snow drifted? We had, in any case, made up our minds to stay here for a while, and we had food in abundance. We knew the dogs thought much the same so long as we have enough to eat, let the weather go hang. Inside the tent Wisting was getting on well when we came in after making these observations. The pot was on, and, to judge by the savoury smell, the preparations were already far advanced. The cutlets were not fried; we had neither frying-pan nor butter. We could, no doubt, have got some lard out of the pemmican, and we might have contrived some sort of a pan, so that we could have fried them if it had been necessary; but we found it far easier and quicker to boil them, and in this way we got excellent soup into the bargain. Wisting knew his business surprisingly well; he had put into the soup all those parts of the pemmican that contained most vegetables, and now he served us the finest fresh meat soup with vegetables in it. The clou of the repast was the dish of cutlets. If we had entertained the slightest doubt of the quality of the meat, this vanished instantly on the first trial. The meat was excellent, quite excellent, and one cutlet after another disappeared with lightning-like rapidity. I must admit that they would have lost nothing by being a little more tender, but one must not expect too much of a dog. At this first meal I finished five cutlets myself, and looked in vain in the pot for more. Wisting appeared not to have reckoned on such a brisk demand.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1667: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

On this occasion, Dr Whistler told a pretty story related by Muffett, a good

author, of Dr. Cayus that built Key's College: that being very old and lived only at that time upon woman's milk, he, while he fed upon the milk of an angry fretful woman, was so himself; and them being advised to take of a good-natured patient woman, he did become so, beyond the common temper of his age. Thus much nutriment, they observed, might do.

NOVEMBER 22

PEARL HARBOUR THANKSGIVING

1945: Pearl Harbor, Hawaii

The U.S.S. PC-1138 was in Pearl Harbor for Thanksgiving Day, and the crew enjoyed the following very basic, but no doubt very satisfying dinner menu.

HOLIDAY FARE

Celery and Ripe Olives

Cream of Tomato Soup

Roast Tom Turkey

Vegetable Dressing

Giblet Gravy

Mashed Potatoes

Fruit Cocktail

Pie Plum Pudding

Nuts Candy

Cigars and Cigarettes

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

As our meat was not sufficiently dry for packing we remained here the whole of this day; but, at night, the heaviest thunder-storm we perhaps had ever experienced, poured down and again wetted it; we succeeded, however, notwithstanding this interruption, in drying it without much taint; but its soft state enabled the maggots to nestle in it; and the rain to which it had been exposed, rendered it very insipid.

Poor Redmond, the last of our bullocks, came frequently to the spot where his late companion had been killed; but finding that he was gone, he returned to his abundant feed, and when I loaded him to continue our journey down the river he was full and sleek. It was interesting to observe how the bullocks on all previous occasions, almost invariably took cognizance of the place where one of their number had been killed. They would visit it either during the night or the next day, walk round the spot, lift their tails, snuff the air with an occasional shake of their horns, and sometimes, set off in a gallop.

1833: Argentina

From Charles Darwin's journal of the voyage of the *Beagle*:

An "estanciero" told me that he often had to send large herds of cattle a long journey to a salting establishment, and that the tired beasts were frequently obliged to be killed and skinned, but that he could never persuade the Gauchos to eat of them, and every evening a fresh beast was slaughtered for their suppers!

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1874: At Sea

Thomas Payne Judkins and his wife were en route from England to New Zealand aboard the sailing ship *Assaye*.

Why this morning at three o'clock Mr. Faulkner discovered that two of his three rabbits were stolen. What a shame! After the man has paid three pounds ten shillings for their passage, and provided food for their maintenance, he has lost two of them in an unknown way. I say unknown, but it is not quite so, though nothing can be proved. At one time one of the watchmen saw one of the sailors on the galley where the rabbits were kept. But having no suspicions he did not watch him closely. He only knew and thought that the sailor was not at work there. At another time the sailors were noticed cooking something in the galley. Nothing was apprehended till three o'clock, when one of the rabbits was seen running along the anchor chain that was lying in front of the forecastle. It was taken down to Mr. Faulkner, who at once got up and began to search for the missing two. But as soon as he heard of what the sailors had been doing, he gave up all hopes of finding them, for he felt assured that the sailors had stolen, killed, cooked and eaten them, and then turned up the one that was found on deck to make people think that the others had gone over-board.

NOVEMBER 23

ST. CLEMENT'S DAY

Saint Clement was the patron saint of the ancient baker's guild and the blacksmiths guild. These groups traditionally held their annual elections and feasts on the day. In the case of blacksmiths, a "Clem Supper" was celebrated annually until about 1880 in the town of Twyford.

In Staffordshire, the day used to be known as "Bite Apple Day," due to the traditional game of trying to bite an apple hanging on a string.

The church of St Clement Danes in London is mentioned in the children's nursery rhyme and game oranges and Lemons. There are a number of theories as to why the church is associated with the fruit, but the nursery rhyme is very old—the first printed version appeared in 1744, but it was certainly in existence long before that date.

The feast of Saint Clement is still observed in the dockyards of London. There has been a longstanding tradition of masters of the trade to give a dinner to their apprentices and associates, and the dish of the day is a "Wayz Goose," which is not a goose but a leg of pork stuffed with sage and onions.

THIRTY THOUSAND DISHES

1243: London, England

The marriage of Richard, Earl of Cornwall (brother of the king), and Cincia, daughter of Reimund, Earl of Provence took place on this day. A sumptuous feast was given after the ceremony. The chronicler Matthew Paris said “It would require a long treatise to describe the astonishing splendour, magnificence and festivity with which the nuptials . . . were celebrated. To give the reader some idea of it, in a few words, above thirty thousand dishes were served up at the marriage dinner.” The cost of the feast was an enormous 287 pounds and 5 shillings.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

1364: London, England

One “Alice de Caustone” was accused of dispensing “false measures” of ale to her customers. Her deceitful method was most ingenious, and her punishment one reserved specifically for female offenders.

Alice’s method was to serve ale from a quart measure, that was not sealed and “the bottom of which was thickened with one and a half inches of pitch, with rosemary laid upon it, so as to look like a bush, in the sight of the common people.” For her crime she was sentenced to “undergo the punishment of the pillory for women ordained, called the *thewe*.” The false measure “was divided into two equal parts, one of which was tied to the pillory, in the sight of the common people”—presumably to alert them to the method of cheating—“and the other part remained in the Chamber of the Guildhall”—presumably as a reminder to the courts of the ruse.

AIRLINE FOOD

1999: USA

Captain Floyd Dean, left the Nort West Airlines flight he was supposed to pilot from Las Vegas to Detroit, telling the crew that he was leaving to find something

to eat. He apparently did not like any of the available selections on the overnight flight, nor did he find anything acceptable at any of the airport outlets. He left the airport and caught a cab downtown, where presumably he found something to his liking. He returned ninety minutes later to some very angry passengers. Dean was subsequently sacked.

“I don’t know if this reflects more on airline rudeness, passenger abuse or the quality of food at the Las Vegas airport,” the passenger said, adding with sarcasm, “I would suggest anyone flying on Northwest might want to pack a picnic lunch for the pilot just in case.”

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1873: Australia

Peter Egerton-Warburton (1813–1889) explored the center of Australia in 1872–1874, and his party became the first to cross the continent from the center to the west, via the Great Sandy Desert.

Three out of us five have been without any food for two days, excepting a few small fruits that grow about here; they are filled with black seeds, which are extremely bitter and have to be carefully extracted. We eat them raw and boiled; the fruit is not absolutely unpleasant, but would not be esteemed a delicacy had we anything else. [The editor noted here: “It is well for the travellers that the bitter seeds were so carefully extracted. Dr. Hooker believes them to have belonged to a species of *Strychnos*.”]

We have but five camels left, one a weak, sickly cow; we may get a few days’ work out of her after this long rest, and I do not wish to kill her; first, because she has not meat enough on her old bones to find us ten days’ food; and secondly, because if I can save any camels to take into the settled parts of Western Australia, I should like to take a cow. It would cripple us greatly to kill a bull, but it would keep us probably for three weeks. No doubt this camel-killing will read badly, but the only alternative we have is to sit down and die, and they after us, for they could not get a drop of water without our help. Whether we kill or whether we don’t kill, we are in a bad plight, and cannot help ourselves.

Richard is very weak today; firewood is scarce, and we can scarcely collect

enough to boil a quart pot of water.

FOOD & WAR

1915: Gallipoli, Turkey, World War I

From the diary of Lieutenant A. L. Dardel:

The man who can eat Gallipoli stodge (called bread) can eat anything. There is one thing we do get here though that is good and that is MacConachie's marmalade, the real thing. . . . I only wish they would issue more edible biscuits. The things we get are great unwieldy things like those tiles. Why couldn't they be a bit smaller and thinner. Somebody will break his neck someday wandering round with his eyes shut and his teeth clenched on a biscuit trying to bite it through. They are most unsuitable for this hilly country.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1661: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys: "This day I had a Chine of beefe sent home, which I bespoke to send and did send it, as a present to my Uncle Wight."

1663: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys: "[A]nd I home to a speedy, though too good a dinner to eat alone, viz., a good goose and a rare piece of roast beef."

Pepys does not mean that his meat was rare in the sense of still very pink inside—this would have been considered poor cooking at the time. "Rare" in this context means extremely fine.

1711: America

From the diary of William Byrd of Westover, Virginia:

I rose about 7 o'clock and read a chapter in Hebrew and some Greek in

Homer. I said my prayers and ate boiled milk for breakfast. . . . About 11 o'clock I went to the coffeehouse where the Governor also came and from thence we went to the capitol and read the bill concerning ports the first time. We stayed till 3 o'clock and then went to dinner to Marot's but could get none there and therefore Colonel Lewis and I dined with Colonel Duke and I ate broiled chicken for dinner. After dinner we went to Colonel Carter's room where we had a bowl of punch of French brandy and oranges. We talked very lewdly and were almost drunk and in that condition we went to the coffeehouse and played at dice and I lost 12 pounds. We stayed at the coffeehouse till almost 4 o'clock in the morning talking with Major Harrison.

NOVEMBER 24

BLACK BREAD FOR POWS

1941: Berlin

The Food Providing Ministry issued an official recipe for black bread for use in Nazi Prisoner of War camps on this date.

- 50% bruised rye grains
- 20% sliced sugar beets
- 20% tree flour (saw dust)
- 10% minced leaves and straw

TO PRESERVE LEMON JUICE FOR A VOYAGE

1866: Australia

The following recipe appeared in the *Queensland Daily Guardian* (Australia) on this day. It was important to have ingredients aboard ship that would prevent the development of scurvy—the medical condition that results from insufficient Vitamin C.

To Preserve Lemon Juice for A Voyage

Select only the best, freshest lemons. Squeeze them well through a strainer. To every 1 qt. of juice add 1 oz. cream of tartar. Let it stand 3 days, (stirring it frequently) and then filter it through thin muslin pinned tightly on the bottom of a sieve. Put it into bottles, filling up the neck of each bottle with a little of the best olive oil. Cork tightly, then seal. When you open a bottle avoid shaking it, and carefully pour off the olive oil that is on top of the lemon juice.

COLONIAL LAW

1777: Colonial America

Regulations were put in place to limit the import of spirits into Philadelphia on this day.

By His Excellency Sir William Howe, K. B. General and Commander in chief, &c. &c. &c. Proclamation. Whereas unrestrained liberty of landing or bringing into this City rum, brandy and other spirituous liquors, for sale, may be attended with many evil consequences. . . . Given under my hand and Head-quarters in Philadelphia, this 24th day of November, 1777. W. Howe.

FOOD FIRSTS

1762

The first written mention of the sandwich appears in Edward Gibbon's journal on this day: "I dined at the Cocoa Tree. . . . That respectable body affords every evening a sight truly English. Twenty or thirty of the first men in the kingdom . . . supping at little tables . . . upon a bit of cold meat, or a Sandwich."

The sandwich is inextricably linked with the person of John Montague, Fourth Earl of Sandwich, who was born in 1718. The myth that the Earl invented the sandwich at the gaming tables is very persistent, but it is certain that he did not invent it. As long as there has been bread, people have been putting other foods on or in it. The Earl's birthday on November 3 has nevertheless been designated "Sandwich Day" ensuring that the myth will be perpetuated

Sandwich Day, ensuring that the myth will be perpetuated.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769:Polynesia

From the *Endeavour* Journal of Joseph Banks: “‘*Oohorage*’At night we came to an anchor in a small open bay; our fishing lines were tried and we soon caught a large number of fish which were calld by the seamen Sea bream, as many as I beleive the ships company could eat in 2 days.”

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1664: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys: “About noon out with Commissioner Pett, and he and I to a Coffeehouse to drink Jocolatte (*Chocolate*) very good.”

1665: London, England

From the Diary of Samuel Pepys:

After dinner, Capt.Cocke and I about some business; and then with my other barrel of oysters home to Greenwich, sent them by water to Mrs. Penington . . . and there sat and talked and eat our oysters with geat pleasure.

1666: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

Up, and to the office, where we sat all the morning. At noon rose and to my closet, and finished my report to my Lord Treasurer of our Tangier wants, and then with Sir J. Minnes by coach to Stepney to the Trinity House, where it is kept again now since the burning of their other house in London. And here a great many met at Sir Thomas Allen’s feast, of his being made an Elder Brother; but he is sick, and so could not be there. Here was much good company, and very merry; but the discourse of Scotland, it seems, is confirmed, and that they are 4000 of them in arms, and do declare for King

confirmed, and that they are 4000 of them in armies, and do declare for King and Covenant, which is very ill news. I pray God deliver us from the ill consequences we may justly fear from it. Here was a good venison pasty or two and other good victuals.

1795: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde. He had guests for dinner on this day:

We gave them for dinner, Hashed-Calfs Head a boiled Chicken and some Bacon, a Leg of Mutton roasted, and a Norfolk batter-Pudding & drippings after that, we had a Duck roasted, Maccaroni & Tarts. By way of Desert, we had white Currants, Pears & Apples, and Filberts.

1801: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde:

This being my Tithe-Audit Day, the following Farmers of my Parish waited on me and paid me their respective dues for Tithe & Rent, & dined here afterwards. . . . Dinner to day, Salt Fish, two boiled Legs of Mutton, Surloin of Beef roasted, plumb Puddings boiled &c. &c. Port Wine, and Punch, with plenty of strong Beer.

1834: England

The writer Emily Brontë (1818–1848) kept an occasional diary as she was growing up. On this day she writes about some ordinary daily activities in the household:

It is past Twelve o'clock Anne and I have not tidied ourselves, done our bedwork or done our lessons and we want to go out to play we are going to have for Dinner Boiled Beef, Turnips, potatoes and apple pudding. The Kitchin is in a very untidy state Anne and I have not done our music exercise which consists of b major Taby said on my putting a pen in her face Ya pitter pottering there instead of pilling a potato I answered O Dear, O Dear, O dear I will directly with that I get up, take a knife and begin pilling (finished) pilling the potatoes papa going to walk Mr. Sunderland

expected.

1842: America

From Nathaniel Hawthorne's *American Journals*: "This is Thanksgiving Day, a good old festival, and we have kept it with our hearts, and, besides, have made good cheer upon our turkey and pudding, and pies and custards, although none sat at our board but our two selves."

1855: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau; "The farmers now ring the apples they have engaged (and the cider); it is time to put them in the cellar, and the turnips. Ice has frozen pretty thick in the bottom of my boat."

NOVEMBER 25

SAINT CATHERINE'S DAY

England

St. Catherine was the patron saint of lace-makers, and her feast day was a rare holiday for these hard-working women. It was traditionally the day on which they were allowed to start using candles to assist them in their work. The women gathered for a day of light-hearted fun and games, and some traditional "hot pot" (a type of egg-nog made from warm beer mixed with rum and eggs).

The other treat of the day, particularly in Bedfordshire, were "Cattern" [Catherine] cakes. These were circular cakes made from bread dough, spiced and studded with dried fruit, and decorated. It is possible that these decorated cakes hark back to pre-Christian symbolism of the sun, and were to propitiate the sun-goddess before she disappeared for the winter.

In *A History of Lace*, written in 1856, a lady from Amphill in Bedfordshire was quoted as saying:

The feast of St. Catherine is no longer kept. In the palmy days of the trade, both old and young used to subscribe a sum of money and enjoy a good cup

of Bohea [tea] and cake, which they called Cattern cake. After tea, they danced and made merry, and finished the evening with a supper of boiled stuffed rabbits smothered with onion sauce.

SOVIET RATIONING

1998: Belarus

The government imposed rationing for food and other consumer goods, on account of severe food shortages. Customers were limited to 2 cartons of milk, 4.4 pounds of meat or poultry, 11 ounces of cheese, 1 lb. of butter 10.5 ounces of chocolate and 10 boxes of matches in one day. Goods were sometimes only available on certain days or at specific times of the day, and queuing for food was almost universal.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1715: Britain

British Patent No. 401 was granted to Thomas Masters, Planter of Pennsylvania, “for an invention found out by Sibylla his wife for cleaning and curing the indian Corn growing in several colonies in America.”

This was the first British patent issued to an American. The patent was issued to Sybilla Masters’s husband, Thomas Masters, as women were not eligible to register patents in their own right.

Masters’s invention consisted of a stamp, or pestle, that, when tripped, descended through a wooden cylinder to a mortar, which held the corn. The action of the stamp turned the corn into meal, which was then transferred to bins for drying, or curing.

1840: Britain

An early patent for food preservation was granted to Charles Grellet, of Hatton Garden. Patent No. 8717 was for “new modes of treating potatoes in order to their being converted into various articles of food, and new apparatus for drying, applicable to that and other purposes.”

MAKING CHEESE

1746: England

William Ellis gave the following recipe in his book *The Country Housewife's Family Companion*, published in 1750:

A Cheshire Maid's Account of her making Cheese, as she gave it me in Hertfordshire on the 25th of November, 1746.

She says, that the milk of thirty of their cows makes a cheese of fifty pounds weight every day, and for well doing it, there must be three persons employed; they heat the night's milk, and put it to the morning's milk, till both are warm as it comes from the cow; then they put two or three spoonfuls of rennet into it, and stir and mix it well together, and in one hour's time, or two at most, the curd will come fit to be broke. Now their way of breaking it (she says) is over a tub, for the whey to run into it, and when the whey is thus discharged into one tub, they put the curd into another, for two or three persons to break it small; this done, they salt it, and work it into the form of a cheese, and in working it, they press all the whey they can out, then they put the curd into a cloth, and bind it about with broad flletting, and lay it in a press that has a great stone on it for lying here two hours, at the end of which they take it out, and shift it into a fresh dry cloth, which they put again into the cheese-press, for its lying here eight hours; then they turn the cheese in the same cloth, and let it lie in the press twelve hours, at the end of which they take it out and shift the cheese into a finer cloth and lighter press, and thus the pressing work is finished. After it is taken out, they scrape the cheese, rub it all over with brine, and then salt it; next they melt fresh butter, and pour it all over the cheese, and then lay it on a rack not far from a fire, and with giving the cheese timely turnings, the whole work is finished.—She also told me, that their cheese factors seldom buy any *Cheshire* cheese under a year old. And why they cannot make such good cheese out of *Cheshire*, is chiefly because their land is of a particular rich nature, some by the River *Weaver* (she says) letting for five pounds an acre, though a reddish sort of land; and here they are so nice, as not to make cheese till the fifth meal is taken from a new calved cow.

FOOD & BOOKS

1886: Boston

On this day, Hattie A. Burr wrote the preface to a unique cookery book which she had edited. Its full title was *The Woman Suffrage Cook Book: Containing thoroughly tested and reliable recipes for cooking, directions for care of the sick, and practical suggestions contributed especially for this work*. The book was created and sold to raise funds for the Massachusetts suffragists, and it fuelled interest in the movement by reaching women of all classes via the only roles accessible to the vast majority of them—those of housewife, cook, and domestic manager.

A few women had managed to break out of society's mold at this time and had carved out careers for themselves, even though they were denied the vote. Hattie Burr acknowledged these women in her preface:

Among the contributors are many who are eminent in their professions as teachers, lecturers, physicians, ministers, and authors,—whose names are household words in the land. A book with so unique and notable a list of contributors, vouched for by such undoubted authority, has never before been given to the public.

Many famous women did indeed provide recipes for the book. One contributor was social activist Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815–1902) who gave the following rhyming recipe for a breakfast dish.

Breakfast Dish.

Cut smoothly from a wheaten loaf

Ten slices, good and true,

And brown them nicely, o'er the coals,

As you for toast would do.

Prepare a pint of thickened milk,

Some codfish shredded small;
And have on hand six hard-boiled eggs,
Just right to slice withal.

Moisten two pieces of the bread,
And lay them in a dish,
Upon them slice a hard-boiled egg,
Then scatter o'er with fish.

And for a seasoning you will need
Of pepper just one shake,
Then spread above the milky juice,
And this one layer make.

And thus, five times, bread, fish and egg,
Or bread and egg and fish,
Then place one egg upon the top,
To crown this breakfast dish.

ICE-CREAM

1773: America

It is not absolutely certain who opened the first ice cream parlor in America, but one of the possible contenders is Fillipo (Philip) Lenzi. A notice announcing his arrival in New York appeared in the *New York Gazetteer* on this day:

Just arrived from London, Monsieur Lenzi, Confectioner. Makes and sells all sorts of fine French, English, Italian and German biskets, preserved fruits; also in brandy, jams, pastes, and jellies, which will be warranted for two or three years, with good care; all sorts of sugar plumbs, dragees, barley sugar, white and brown sugar candy, ice cream and fruits, sugar ornaments which will soon be ready for sale, or to lend out, with many other articles in all the greatest perfection, which he will sell and the most reasonable rates, he being content with a moderate profit, and spares no cost or pains to have every thing of the very best quality. He will undertake to furnish any public entertainment, as he has had the management of several given at Balls, Masquerades, &c. in most of the principal cities of Europe. He hopes for the countenance and encouragement of the public, which he will ever gratefully acknowledge. His arriving here so late in the season has prevented him from laying in to a great stock of fruits, &c. as he would otherwise have done. He will reside at the house of Mr. Richard Waldron, near the Exchange, till he can get a house more suitable for his business.

See May 12 for his first advertisement.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1873: Australia

Major Peter Warburton was on his private expedition to be the first to cross Australia from east to west. The expedition, having left Alice Springs in April, was in serious trouble, with only a few of the original seventeen camels left. The stronger members of the party had gone on ahead, and on this day they returned with the good news that they had found to the river. Warburton wrote of the celebration “We killed a camel at sunset, and supped largely off heart and liver.” The kidneys and tongue were eaten at breakfast.

I must defer killing till the last moment, but I don't see how I can put it off beyond tomorrow. 5 p.m. Lewis has returned; from his report I infer that he has struck the higher sources of the Oakover; the distance is greater than I expected, but might I think be shortened by a due west course. The party

being now all together, we killed a camel at sunset, and supped largely off heart and liver.

26th.—Boiled the kidneys and tongue for breakfast; we can scarcely believe it. All hands are employed in cutting up and jerking meat. The weather has been comparatively cool for the last day or two, which is a great relief to us.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1711: America

From the diary of William Byrd of Westover, Virginia:

I rose about 7 o'clock and found my cold much worse. However I read a chapter in Hebrew and some Greek in Homer. I said my prayers and ate boiled milk for breakfast. I was so disordered with my cold that I could not go to church but read some English. About 11 o'clock Mr. Clayton came to see me and I desired him to lend me his horse to ride to Queen's Creek. About one my brother Custis called on me and I went with him home and found all the family well. Just before we sat to dinner Dr. Cocke came to us. I ate some roast beef for dinner notwithstanding my cold, which continued violently. We were merry till the evening and then we drank a bowl of punch made of French brandy and oranges which I drank for my cold and ate roast apples with it.

NOVEMBER 26

1825: USA

The oldest undergraduate college social fraternity in continuous existence began over informal suppers of baked potatoes and apples. The Kappa Alpha society was established on this date by a group of nine friends who called themselves The Philosophers. There are now nine chapters in the United States and Canada. One of the founding members, Arthur Burtis, described the origin of the society:

After we were domiciled in our upper chamber, in the fourth story of the south section—South College—northeast corner . . . we now and then beguiled the long winter evenings and entertained our friends with a few

begged the long winter evenings and entertained our friends with a few baked potatoes and salt and comforted them with apple.

DIET SQUAD DINNER

1916: Chicago, USA

The Chicago Health Department began a very public experiment in November, 1916, to demonstrate that eating well was possible on forty cents a day. Four days into the trial, the volunteers were weighed and the results were reported in the newspapers:

The “Diet Squad” after four days of living on a menu limited to 40 cents a day, was weighed this morning and showed a gain of five pounds.

Six of the twelve showed gains in weight despite the restricted diet. Two were unchanged, while the losses, except in the case of Dr. A. J. Stokes, the heavyweight of the squad, all were under one pound each. Dr. Stokes, who weighed 223 $\frac{1}{4}$ pounds before undertaking the experiment, has lost 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ pounds. The greatest gain was by Herghild Halvorsen, who began with 148 $\frac{1}{2}$ pounds and has acquired 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ pounds additional flesh.

At noon was the squad’s big meal of the week. Here is what they had in unlimited quantities:

Julienne soup, roast port, glazed sweet potatoes, celery, pumpkin pie.

“That meal tasted as if it had cost \$40 instead of less than 40 cents” exclaimed Henry Gehring Jr., one of the squad as he pushed back his chair at the conclusion of the meal and loosened his belt.

FUNERAL FOOD

1725: England

The Bradford Historical and Antiquarian Society studied a number of eighteenth century wills at their meeting in November 1885. One of the records was of the funeral of the wife of John Cuttell. Disbursed by John Cuttell at funeral dinner of my wife, 26th November, 1725:

- A backloyn and inlift of beef 7 6
- A hinder quarter of good large veal 4 6
- Two very large legs of mutton 5 2
- A shoulder and neck of mutton 2 6
- A shoulder of veal for sweet pye and breast of veal roasted 2 0
- A loyn of mutton roasted 1 6
- A fine large ham 7/-, and six boyled pullets 3/- 10 0
- Two geese bought dressed, one 1/2, the other 1/6 2 3
- Two geese more at home 2 6
- Half a dozen ducks, said fatt 4 0
- Three couples of rabbits, at 9d a couple 2 3
- Six pullets roasted 4 0
- Codd or fresh lyng for two dishes of fish 2 0
- Capers, cowcumbers and other pickles 3 0
- Two pounds of prunes for stewing 0 6
- Apples for sweet tarts 1/6, gooseberries 6d 2 0
- Raisins and currants 1 6
- A shock of wheat and grinding 3 0
- 15 lbs. of butter, at 5d a lb. 6 3
- Salt for laying on the beef at Leeds and using at home 9d.
- Pepper and other seasoning 9d 1 6

- Perhaps two chines of beef to the boyled veal, and for turnips, carrots, cabbage to the boyled mutton, and perhaps something of salletting to the roast mutton 2 6
- Perhaps two beast tongues to the boyled mutton 1 6
- Bread for all uses and cheese to tarts 5 0
- Drink for 60 persons 4d, a piece one with another, but too much 20 0
- Charges and trouble of seeking in and buying provisions, riding and expenses 5 0
- Coals for fires, roasting, boyling, heating ovens, and fuel 5 0
- Lend of dishes, knives, forks, salts, plates, flagons, jugs, pots, pans, &c. 5 0
- Linen goods, table cloaths, napkins, towels and washing 5 0
- Cook's wages, 2 days and ½, 2/6, other women servants and waiters, 2/6, man servant and another to help about the stables, 2/6 7 6

“John Cuttall said he counted all twice, and were 63 or 62. But I could not believe it, or near 60 beside ourselves, but forced to let it go, as had nobody to wait or count them.

“M.F.M. To profit by mistake and be more careful in like case for future, and to bargain myself exactly how many relations to come, and how long to be served with drink.”

Perhaps the most interesting item on this menu from today's perspective is the “shoulder of veal for sweet pye.” We don't normally think of meat such as veal in relation to a sweet pie, but in the past there was not such a clear distinction between sweet and savory dishes. In medieval times, sugar was a very expensive imported ingredient, and was used in the same way as a spice. Sugar became gradually cheaper after the establishment of sugar refineries in England in the sixteenth century, but it was not cheap until the nineteenth century. Even after it became easily available, the combination of sweet ingredients mixed with meat persisted almost up to recent times in the form of mincemeat pies.

To make a fine sweet Veal Pie

Season your veal with salt, pepper, cloves, mace, and nutmeg, all beaten fine. Cut your meat into little pieces, and having made a good puff paste crust, lay it into your dish. Then lay in your meat, strew on it some currants and stone raisins clean washed, and some sugar. Then lay on it some forcemeat balls made sweet, and in the summer some artichoke bottoms boiled, and scalded grapes in the winter.

Boil Spanish potatoes cut in pieces, candied citron, candied orange, and lemon peel, and three or four blades of mace. Put butter on the tops close up your pie, and bake it. Have ready against: it comes out of the oven, a caudle thus made Take a pint of white wine, and mix in it the yolks of three eggs; stir it well together over the fire one way all the time, till it be thick. Then take it off, stir in sugar enough to sweeten it, and squeeze in the juice of a lemon. Pour it hot into your pie, and close it up again.

—*The Accomplished Housekeeper, and Universal Cook* (1797) by T. Williams

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1768: Argentina

From the *Endeavour* Journal of Joseph Banks:

“*Rio de Janeiro*” I myself went ashore this morn before day break and stayd till dark night; while I was ashore I met several of the inhabitants who were very civil to me, taking me to their houses where I bought of them stock for the ship tolerably cheap, a porker midlingly fat for 11 shill, a muscovy duck something under two shils &c. . . . I also saw their gardens or small patches in which they cultivate many sorts of European garden stuff as Cabbage, peas, beans, kidney beans, turnips, white raddishes, pumkins, & c. but all much inferior to ours except perhaps the last; here also they grow water melons and pine apples the only Fruits which I have seen them cultivate. The water melons are very good but the Pines much inferior to those I have tasted in Europe; hardly one I have yet had could have been reckond among the midling sort, many were worse than I have seen sent from table in England where nobody would Eat them, tho in

general they are very sweet they have not the least flavour; but more of their Fruits by and by.

In these gardens grow also Yamms and Mandihoca or Cassada which supplys the place of Bread here, for as our Europaeen bread corn will not grow here all the Flour they have is brought from Portugal at a large expence, too great for even the midling people to purchase much more the inferior ones.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1813: England

From Lord Byron's Letters and Journals. His note on this day is further indication of his eating disorder: "Awoke a little feverish, but no headache. . . . Lord Holland invited me to dinner to-day; but three days' dining would destroy me. So, without eating at all since yesterday, I went to my box at Covent Garden."

NOVEMBER 27

THE TWINKIE DEFENSE

1978: San Francisco

The mayor of San Francisco, George Moscone, and city supervisor Harvey Milk were assassinated at City Hall on this day by former city supervisor Dan White. His defense was that he was suffering diminished capacity due to depression, one of the symptoms of which was a switch from a healthy diet to an excessive consumption of junk food high in sugar. Although the defense did not argue that the diet contributed to his act, and Twinkies were not specifically implicated, the press coined the phrase "Twinkie Defense" and it subsequently became a metaphor for an improbable legal defense.

FOOD & WAR

1854: Crimean War

A report in General orders on this day described the severity of the rationing situation:

Deaths alarmingly numerous, duty excessively hard, rations extremely scarce, in one Company for 16 men there were only 4 rations (commissary unable to convey the requisite supply of forage *etc.* to Camp even only from Balaklava in consequence of the badness of the roads and death among the Transport animals

Weather very inclement and cholera raging, brought on by want of food, of exposure, want of nourishment, excessive duty, scarcity of medical comforts and proper accommodation for the sick.

Cooking still done by the men themselves individually wherever they could scrape together any fuel, as none now served out to them. Green coffee still issued when available, 5 beans about one man's allowance twice a week.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1811: USA

From the journal of Wilson Price Hunt's overland expedition in 1811–1812:

[O]n the 27th, to a pass so narrow that it scarcely left enough space for us to get through. We were often forced to take the baggage from the backs of our horses and wade through the water. On the previous evening we had caught a beaver that furnished us with a meager breakfast and we made a supper of some bouillon tablets. I ordered a horse killed and my people thought the meat very good. I could eat it only with regret because I had become attached to the poor animal. (33 miles northwest)

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1711: America

From the diary of William Byrd of Westover, Virginia:

I rose about 7 o'clock and read a chapter in Hebrew and some Greek in Homer. I said my prayers and ate boiled milk for breakfast. The weather

was very cold and threatened snow. . . . We read several bills and the Governor came to us and made his exceptions to some clauses in the bill concerning probate and administration, which we resolved to amend. We sat till about 4 o'clock and then went to dinner and I ate some roast mutton. In the evening we went to the coffeehouse where I played at cards and won 25 shillings.

1749: Turkey

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu was in Constantinople with her ambassador husband, and wrote to her daughter on this day.

I have now no other but in my little Huswifery, which is easily gratified in this Country, where (by the help of my receipt Book) I make a very shining Figure amongst my Neighbours by the Introduction of Custards, Cheesecakes, and minc'd Pies, which were entirely unknown in these Parts, and are receiv'd with universal applause, and I have reason to beleive will preserve my Memory even to Future ages, particularly by the art of Butter makeing, in which I have so improv'd them that they now make as good as in any part of England.

1790: USA

Thomas Jefferson wrote to Samuel Vaughan Jr. on this day:

I feel myself much indebted to Mr. Vaughan your father for the opportunity he has furnished me of a direct correspondence with you, and also to yourself for the seeds of the Mountain rice you have been so good as to send me. I had before received from your brother in London some of the same parcel brought by Capt. Bligh; but it was so late in the spring of the present year that tho the plants came up and grew luxuriantly, they did not produce seed. Your present will enable me to enlarge the experiment I propose for the next year, and for which I had still reserved a few seeds of the former parcel. About two months ago I was fortunate enough to recieve a cask of mountain rice from the coast of Africa. This has enabled me to engage so many persons in the experiment as to be tolerably sure it will be fairly made by some of them. It will furnish also a comparison with that from Timor. I have the success of this species of rice at heart, because it will not only enable other states to cultivate rice which have not lands

will not only enable other states to cultivate rice which have not lands susceptible of inundation but because also if the rice be as good as is said, it may take place of the wet rice in the Southern states, & by superseding the necessity of overflowing their lands, save them from the pestilential & mortal fevers brought on by that operation. We have lately had introduced a plant of the Melon species which, from it's external resemblance to the pumpkin, we have called a pumpkin, distinguishing it specifically as the potatoe-pumpkin, on account of the extreme resemblance of it's taste to that of the sweet-potatoe. It is as yet but little known, is well esteemed at our table, and particularly valued by our negroe's. Coming much earlier than the real potatoe, we are so much the sooner furnished with a substitute for that root. I know not from whence it came; so that perhaps it may be originally from your islands. In that case you will only have the trouble of throwing away the few seeds I enclose you herewith. On the other hand, if unknown with you, I think it will probably succeed in the islands, and may add to the catalogue of plants which will do as substitutes for bread. I have always thought that if in the experiments to introduce or to communicate new plants, one species in an hundred is found useful & succeeds, the ninety nine found otherwise are more than paid for. My present situation & occupations are not friendly to agricultural experiments, however strongly I am led to them by inclination. I will ask permission to address myself to you for such seeds as might be worth trying from your quarter, freely offering you reciprocal services in the same or any other line in which you will be so good as to command them. I have the honor to be with great respect & esteem, Sir Your most obedt. & most humble servt.

NOVEMBER 28

THANKSGIVING IN ALCATRAZ

1946: USA

The menu was prepared in advance for the Thanksgiving dinner for this day, for inmates in solitary confinement. As it turned out, there were no prisoners being disciplined in that manner on the day, but had there been, this is what they would have been served:

- **Breakfast:**

- One-half bowl of milk.
- One half-bowl of coffee
- One ration of cereal
- **Dinner:**
- Peanut Soup
- Roast Turkey with Celery Dressing
- Candied Sweet Potatoes
- Giblet Gravy
- Buttered Peas
- Cranberry Sauce
- Fresh Grapes
- Pumpkin Pie
- Hot Biscuits
- Bread, Oleo, Coffee
- **Supper:**
- One-half bowl soup or green salad
- One bowl of coffee
- Four slices of bread.

FOOD & THE LAW

1990: USA

The Organic Foods Production Act passed into law on this day. The main aims

of the act were:

1. to establish national standards governing the marketing of certain agricultural products as
2. organically produced products;
3. to assure consumers that organically produced products meet a consistent standard; and
4. to facilitate interstate commerce in fresh and processed food that is organically produced.

A requirement of the act was to be the setting up of a National Organic Standards Board to “assist in the development of standards for substances to be used in organic production and to provide recommendations to the Secretary regarding implementation of the act.”

THE POTATO

1567: Canary Islands

The earliest reference to potatoes being sent to Europe is in the records of a notary, Lorenzo Palenzuela, in Las Palmas. The record relates to the consignment of goods from Juan de Molina to Luis de Queseda in Antwerp, Belgium: “[A]nd in the same way I received three medium size barrels [that] you said carried potatoes, oranges, and green lemons.”

It is not known how, or by what route the potatoes arrived in the Canaries, but it seems clear from this record that they must have been growing in significant quantities there by 1567. Given that the first known sighting of potatoes in South America was by Pizarro in 1532, this suggests that they were imported to the islands very soon after their discovery there by the Spanish.

FOOD & WAR

1918: Britain, World War I

The *Daily News* announced a temporary increase in the sugar ration in time for Christmas:

More Sugar for Christmas

¼ lb. Extra Allowed for One Week

Lord Bledisloe, as Chairman of the Royal Commission on the Sugar Supply, announces that, after consultation with the Consumer's Council, it has been decided to grant an additional ration of ¼ lb. of sugar for the week ending Dec. 21 to all holders of ration books.

The special increase of the ration previously announced for that week for children under six years of age will not therefore take effect.

NEWSPAPERS FOR VEGETABLES

1858: USA

The *Missouri-Democrat* newspaper of Marshall, Missouri, offered its readers an unusual form of subscription in an announcement on this day.

Our country friends, who have not yet paid their subscription, are respectfully informed that we have to buy all the vegetables for table use, and those who have cabbage, potatoes, or anything of that kind to spare can paid their indebtedness in that way.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1520: At Sea

The great Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan on his great voyage of 1519–1522 had rounded the tip of South America and entered the Pacific Ocean in search of a western route to the Spice Islands. They had been away from land for almost four months, provisions were very low and his men were starting to show signs of scurvy: “[H]aving in this time consumed all their Bisket and other Victuals, they fell into such necessitie that they were forced to eate the powder that remayned thereof, being now full of Wormes, and stinking like Pisse, by reason of the salt Water.”

1811: USA

From the journal of Wilson Price Hunt's overland expedition in 1811–1812:

On the 28th we arrived early at a Shoshone village. The Indians had just killed two colts for food. Except for the seeds of a plant that looks like flax and that they pulverize, the horsemeat was their only food. I bought a sack of the former, as well as some pieces of horsemeat which was fat and tender.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1666: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

I had six noble dishes for them, dressed by a man-cook, and commended, as ended they deserved, for exceedingly well done. We eat with great pleasure, and I enjoyed myself in it with reflections upon the pleasures which I at best can expect, yet not to exceed this—eating in silver plates, and all things mighty rich and handsome about me.

1762: London, England

James Boswell, the biographer of Samuel Johnson, had just arrived in London and found himself lodgings.

I then walked in the Park and went home to dinner, which was just a good joint of veal and a pudding. This they told me was their usual fare, which I approved of. I found my landlord rather too free. Therefore I carried myself with reserve and something of state.

1856: USA

From the journal of Henry D. Thoreau:

To chestnut wood by Turnpike. to see if I could find my comb. probably

lost out of my pocket when I climbed and shook a chestnut tree more than a month ago. Unexpectedly find many chestnuts in the burs which have fallen some time ago. Many are spoiled, but the rest, being thus moistened, are softer and sweeter than a month ago, very agreeable to my palate.

1888: England

An undergraduate at Christ Church, Oxford, wrote to the Steward on this day, complaining about the food:

[S]pecimen of the sort of soup we have in Hall. It was called “Cressy Soup”*, & I should say the ingredients were poison, because up to now 10.30 P.M. although I only had a mouthful I have failed to eradicate the taste yet! I have to complain also of the Potatoes which are simply old ones warmed up & boiled in fat.

(** presumably Crecy)

NOVEMBER 29

SHIPBOARD DINNER

1926: At Sea

The R.M.S. *Edavana* was part of the fleet of the British India Steamship Co. from 1911–1926. Passengers sat down to the following dinner menu on this day:

Consomme Julienne

Hotch Potch Soup

Fillet Fish and Parsley Sauce

Mutton Cutlets la Reform

Brinjal a-la Russe

Roast Sirloin of Beef

Roast Fowl and Bread Sauce

Baked and Boiled Potatoes

Spinach

Canton Pudding

Snow Jelly

Dessert Coffee

FOOD & WAR

1918: France, World War I

Future president Harry Truman was on active military duty France, and while he was away he wrote regularly to his sweetheart and future wife, Bess Wallace.

Dear Bess

. . . I put in for a leave and got surprised by getting it. It was necessary to go to Paris in order to get here but time spent on the road doesn't count on the leave so I spent twenty-four hours in Paris and twenty-four hours at Marseilles. I saw a lot of places in that twenty-four hours in Paris. I dined at Maxim's, went to the Folies Bergeres, saw Notre Dame, Napoleon's Tomb, the Madeleine . . . I am getting very heavy (fat I should say). I'm afraid you won't love me when you see me with cheeks all pushed out and a double chin. My uniform fits me like the skin on a sausage and I weigh 174 pounds. When I came out of the Argonne drive I weighed about 135 but plenty of sleep and a good allowance of bacon and beans have had their effect. I hate to think what I'll be like after seven days of chicken and dumplings and "Haut Sautern" down here. There is only one thing that could make the place real heaven and that would be to have you here.

1941: USA, World War II

The *New York Times* of this date summarised the current American soldier's rations:

From Lieut. Col. Rohland A. Isker, of the Quartermaster Corps, we have learned of the various rations into which Army food is divided . . .

. . . “garrison ration”, the arrangement used while they were in training in camp, and under which the mess officer, given a definite allotment of money, planned, and bought whatever food he wished, where he chose. The men who had a mess officer with a flair for food, and a knowledge of its nutritional values—and a canny ability to stretch pennies—had no worries under this system. But those whose officers were endowed with fewer gastronomic talents were somewhat out of luck.

In the present emergency, practically all the Army is on “field rations,” which means that meals are planned and supplies purchased under the jurisdiction of the quartermaster corps for all the units in a territory, with a consequent increase in purchasing power. Even more important, the meal-planners are trained in nutrition, and see to it that every man jack under their supervision gets all the minerals, vitamins and calories that he needs.

The second ration in use is the B, which is similar to the first “field ration,” with the important difference that no perishables are included. Canned meats and canned and dehydrated fruits and vegetables are its chief ingredient. This, of course, is for use by units in out-of-the-way places where supplies of food are hard to come by.

Field ration C is for use when cooking, even in a field kitchen, is impossible. A complete day’s menu is contained in six cans—two to a meal. There are three cans of meat products—stew, hash, or meat with beans, and three cans of biscuits, soluble coffee, sugar, and a confection fortified with the Vitamin B complex. Troops who may be separated from other food supplies receive issues of the D ration which consists of a four-ounce bar of chocolate fortified with Vitamin B.

Most interesting of all the rations is the “special” that has been developed for the use of mechanized or parachute troops, or aviators. Concentration plus high nutritional value is naturally of the essence in this ration, which would be used only by men under the strain of actual combat. Its specific details are confidential, Colonel Isker explains, but proteins, fats, carbohydrates, minerals and vitamins are carefully balanced in a meal that weighs about twelve ounces and will fit into a soldier’s shirt pocket. The special ration, which has recently undergone a series of clinical tests, is

designed to withstand the heat of the tropics or the cold of the Arctic for one year without melting in the one or freezing in the other.

THE DISNEY CARROT

1941: Britain, World War II

The *Times* of this day published an article on the glut of carrots, a carrot-luncheon, and the vigorous promotion of the vegetable that was about to be unleashed—including some special carrot characters designed by Walt Disney.

A summer which was so unkind to the onion crop as to disappoint Lord Woolton's hope of getting a ration of at least 2 lb a head has given the country a bumper crop of carrots. . . . Mr. W. P. Spens did not exaggerate when he claimed at a luncheon given by the National Vegetable Marketing Company that the carrot is one of the most valuable vegetables that this island can produce. The luncheon which his hearers had enjoyed consisted largely of carrots. There were carrots in the hors d'oeuvre, carrots in the soup, carrots with the chicken, and a tasty carrot sweet that might have passed for a peach flan.

Now that all these carrots have been grown and harvested, it remains to see that the public use them to full advantage. . . . The vegetable distributive trade have promised their whole-hearted cooperation in keeping carrots well in front of their customers. Tasteful displays of carrots will add colour to the greengrocers stocks, which now lack exotic fruits from abroad. The full force of publicity is to be let loose in this cause, and no doubt we shall soon know all about the carrot's virtues. Mr. Walt Disney has even made a film dramatizing the carrot. So it will soon be carrots all the way, and we must believe that we shall be better men and women if we succeed in eating through this year's bumper crop.

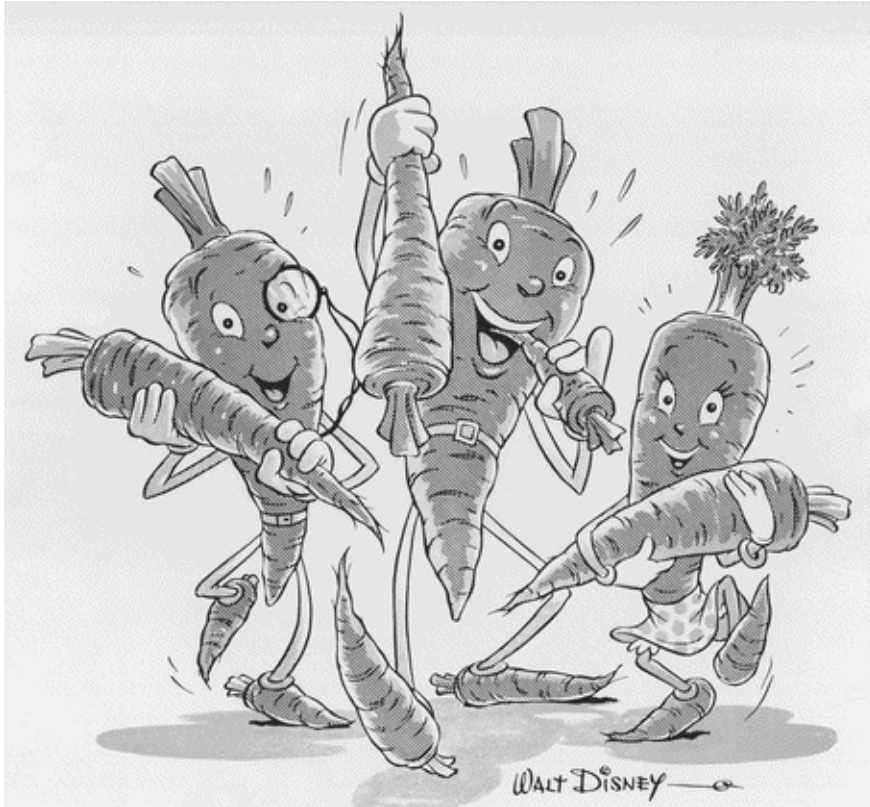


Image of wartime Disney carrot from wartime poster

(Associated Press)

CACTUS DIET

1907: USA

The “Cactus Diet” experiment began on this day. There was a great deal of interest in the prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia*) in the first couple of decades of the twentieth century, thanks to the efforts of horticulturalist Luther Burbank. Burbank had developed a spineless variety of the cactus after sixteen years of work, and the plant was launched on June 1, 1907 in a 28-page catalog, *The New Agricultural-Horticultural Opuntias: Plant Creations for Arid Regions*.

There was widespread belief and hope that this plant would make the desert bloom, open up the arid regions of the country to cattle grazing, help solve the human food problem of the future—and make some fortunes along the way. The grand plan was promoted in a variety of ways by enthusiasts, and the strategies

included widely publicized “cactus diets” and several “cactus dinners.”

Dr. Leon Albert Landon, one of its chief proponents, began an experiment on this day in which he intended to live “almost exclusively” on the spineless cactus for fourteen days. At the conclusion of the experiment, he held a dinner on December 13 at which the menu was based almost entirely on the cactus (see this date).

The newspapers reported that:

The test was not intended to show that cactus alone will do as an article of food, but rather as a test of all those vegetables rich in organic salts.

Although Dr. Landons also ate celery, asparagus, lettuce and spinach, and a small amount of animal fat in the butter in which the vegetables were cooked.

But what does the cactus actually taste like? The *Los Angeles Herald* of January 31, 1909 included the following snippet:

Not so long ago the menu card of Hotel-Alexandria contained among the delicacies Burbank’s thornless cactus. The chef had interested himself in this dish for some time and says that when fried the cactus resembles egg plant but with a more delicious flavor. He has also found that it excels as a boiled vegetable and as a salad.

A CULINARY MASTERPIECE?

1898: France

There are several schools of thought on the origin of the classic French dish of slowly cooked hare called *Lièvre à la Royale* but perhaps the most famous is the one given by the French Senator Aristide Couteaux in his newspaper column *Le Temps* on this day. The very lengthy preparation of this dish is detailed in *Food: What We Eat and How We Eat It*, by Clarissa Dickson Wright, one of the Two Fat Ladies of British television fame, and by Elizabeth David in *A Book of Mediterranean Food*. In summary, the Senator started by described how he spent a week hunting in Poitou for the perfect specimen, before rushing it to his friend the restaurateur M. Spüller for the seven-hour preparation.

You require a male hare, with red fur, killed if possible in mountainous country, of fine French descent (characterised by the light nervous elegance of head and limbs) weighing from 5 to 6 pounds, that is to say older than a leveret but still adolescent. The important thing is that the hare should have been cleanly killed and so not have lost a drop of blood.

Once the hare is obtained, and the blood conserved, the other ingredients needed are 2-3 tablespoons goose fat, ¼ lb fat bacon rashers, ¼ lb bacon in one piece, 6 oz. of good wine vinegar, two bottles of Macon or Médoc (not less than two years old), 20 cloves of garlic, 40 cloves of shallot, 2 or 3 small glasses of cognace, and the usual carrot, onion stuck with a clove, and bouquet garni.

M. Couteaux explains the necessity for attention to detail. He instructs that “the chopping of the garlic and the shallots must be so fine that each of them attain as nearly as possible a molecular state” because the aim is that “the multiple and diverse aromas melt into a whole so harmonious that neither one dominates, nor discloses its particular origin, and so arouse some preconceived prejudice, however regrettable.” He finishes by noting that, if properly prepared, it is “needless to say, that to use a knife to serve the hare would be a sacrilege. A spoon alone is amply sufficient.”

EARLY FOOD TRADEMARKS

1870: USA

The oldest food trademark in continuous use in the United States is that of Underwood’s Deviled Ham. William Underwood Co. of Boston, Massachusetts, one of the country’s first successful canning companies, registered a “TradeMark for Deviled Entremets” which was “Intended for Sandwiches, Luncheons, and Traveler’s Repasts” with the very new United States Patent Office. The trademark registration number was 82. It was not the first trademarked food—that honor belonged to “J.B. Baldy & Co. Railroad Brand Mustard,” (No. 2.)

Other foods which were trademarked before Underwood’s ham were were canned menhaden (fish) packed by Tracy Coit called “Shadines” (No. 4), William Lanfair Ellis of Baltimore’s canned oysters (No. 5), William Ryan’s Sugar-Cured Hams (No. 11), H. K. Thurber’s Best Yeast-Powder (No. 14), and

Century White Wheat Bourbon (No. 15).



Logo for Underwood's Deviled Ham, Boston, Massachusetts

(Getty Images)

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769: Polynesia

From the *Endeavour* Journal of Joseph Banks: “‘off Cape Brett’; ‘Motuaro or Bay of Islands’ . . . Night coming on we went onboard carrying much Celery, the only plant of any use even to us, for of all the places I have landed in this

was the only one which did not produce one new vegetable.”

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1728: England

From the diary of John Baptist Grano, a musician who spent some time in debtors prison. Debtors prison at this time was run more along the lines of lodgings in which prisoners who could afford to were able to send out for food, and visit with other prisoners.

[D]rank Coffee for breakfast, order'd a Fire in my own Room . . . order'd some boyl'd Onions for Dinner; waiting for which I wrote and read . . . 'twas about 4 a clock before I went to Dinner and Mr Blunt did me the honour of eating with me; I had a Rabbit to entertain him with, but ate none of it my selfe.

1798: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde:

Great Rejoicings in Norwich to day on Lord Nelsons late great & noble Victory over the French near Alexandria in Egypt. An ox roasted whole in the Market-Place &c. . . . Dinner to day, Leg of Mutton roasted &c. I gave my Servants this Evening after Supper some strong-Beer and some Punch to drink Admiral Lord Nelson's Health.

1851: USA

An immigrant living in Beloit, Wisconsin, wrote to friends back in Norway:

Strawberries, raspberries, and blackberries thrive here. From these they make a wonderful dish combined with syrup and sugar, which is called “pai”. I can tell you that is something that glides easily down your throat; they also make the same sort of “pai” out of apples or finely ground meat, with syrup added, and that is really the most superb.

NOVEMBER 30

SAINT ANDREW'S DAY

Saint Andrew is the patron saint of Scotland, and his feast day is a public holiday there. Scottish societies around the world hold special dinners and the menu commonly includes haggis, baked sheep's head and whisky. At one time the Scots resident in London would conduct a procession through the streets, carrying a singed sheep's head (which presumably then went into the cooking pot).

In some parts of Britain it was traditional to eat "Tandra Cake" (a corruption "St. Andrew's Cake") or "Tandra Wig," and in regions of France where he is popular, a cake made with walnuts is traditional.

The day used to be a day for a riotous squirrel hunting expedition in some counties of Britain, although the reasons for this are not known.

ST. ANDREW'S SOCIETY DINNER

St. Andrew's Societies were founded early in the history of America. In Philadelphia in 1755, the by-laws of the St. Andrew's society stipulated that:

In order to observe that frugality which becomes a charitable society, the four assistants shall take care at the quarterly meetings to provide a neat a plain supper, and shall call for and settle the bill at eleven o'clock, at furthest every meeting, except St. Andrew's night and at nine o'clock furthest on that night . . . nor shall any liquor be brought into the company but what is ordered by the assistants, and if any members shall stay after the bill is settled, their expenses shall be paid wholly by themselves.

It seems that an exception to the concept of a "neat and plain supper" was fairly broadly interpreted. At the meeting of September 3, 1755, the menu included: "Two hams, 24 pounds; round of beef, 23 pounds; sirloin of beef, 29 pounds, four tongues, dozen of fowls, side of lamb, 10 pounds of veal, pigeon pie, pound of butter, 5 pounds of cheese and 10 six penny loaves."

The St. Andrew's Society of the State of New York was founded in 1756. A grand dinner to celebrate its 150th anniversary was held at the Waldorf Hotel on

November 30th, 1906. The menu was far from frugal:

MENU

Cape Cod Oysters

Clear Green Turtle

Timbale, Montargis

Radishes Celery Olives Salted Almonds

Aiguillettes of Sea Bass, Verdoyant

Breast of Chicken, Linné

Noisettes of Beef, Bannockburn

Potatoes rissolé in quarters . Peas, French style

Haggis

Fancy Sherbet

Ruddy Duck, roasted

Fried Hominy Currant Jelly

Chiffonade Salad

Mousse à l'orange

Assorted Cakes Fruit

Coffee

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1858: USA. Mason Jars

John L. Mason was granted Patent No. 22,186 for "Improvement In Screw-Neck

Bottles.”

His patent specifications say that he has “invented new and useful Improvements in the Necks of Bottles, Jars, & especially such as are intended to be air and water tight, such as are used for sweetmeats.”

1875: USA

African American inventor Alexander P. Ashbourne, of Oakland, California, was granted Patent No. 170,460 for an “Improvement in Biscuit Cutters.” It was the first patent issued for a biscuit cutter. The specifications described the device:

My invention relates to a novel domestic utensil . . . and it consists of a molding-board, having hinged to one side or end a cover, which is provided with the desired shaped cutters upon its lower side. These cutters have plates inside and springs, which allow the plates to recede when the cutters are pressed down upon the material, but which forces them out when the cuover is lifted.

1926: USA

Clarence Birdseye of Gloucester, Massachusetts, was granted Patent No. 1,608, 832 for a “Method in Preparing Foods and the Product Obtained Thereby.” His invention related to the preparation of fish, and specifically to avoid the problem of frozen fish fillets having “ a tendency to break or crumble in handling, particularly while or after being cooked.” It achieved this by taking advantage of “natural gluey material” contained in fish to create “a firm homogeneous cake” which would “render the same more readily handles without damage, and more permanent in form when sliced, cooked or otherwise treated after purchase and in preparation for eating.” In other words, Birdseye’s method allowed the production of frozen fish-fingers.

CABBAGE ROLL DAY

In Sweden *Kåldolmens Dag* (Day of the Cabbage Roll) is celebrated on 30 November, the death day of Charles XII of Sweden. The day was instigated by *Kåldolmens Vänner* (*Friends of the Cabbage Roll*).

The dish is considered to be a variety of the dolma, which is common in Eastern Mediterranean countries. Charles XII spent two years in exile in Bender, Moldavia, then part of the Ottoman Empire, after losing the Battle of Poltava in 1709. When he returned to Sweden, having failed to persuade his allies there to join him against the Russians, some of the creditors who had helped fund his wars followed him there. It is assumed that the dolma was introduced to Sweden as a result of their influence, in the first few decades of the eighteenth century. From this point, as is usual with introduced dishes, it underwent some regional variations and was sufficiently recognized to be included in a Swedish cookbook written in 1755.

FOOD & WAR

1215: Britain

The siege of Rochester Castle ended after 8 weeks. King John defeated the rebels by ordering tunnels to be dug under the walls of the castle, and when this was done, placed the order: “We command that with all haste, by day and night, you send to us 40 bacon pigs of the fattest and those less good for the eating to bring fire under the tower.”

The pigs were not ordered for the purpose of providing food for the besieging army, but to create a weapon. The fat of the pigs was used to coat the beams supporting the tunnel, ensuring that the fire which was then set would burn hot and swift. The rebels, who by this time were living on the meat of their horses, left in a hurry as the southeast tower burned down.

CHURCHILL’S BIRTHDAY PARTY

1943: Teheran

The Reuter’s special correspondent described the party held to celebrate the sixty-ninth birthday of English prime minister Winston Churchill on this day, which fell during the Teheran Conference.

Stalin “Life” of Party Held by Notables

Teheran, Iran. Premier-Marshall Joseph Stalin of Russia, it can be revealed today, was the life of the party at which Prime Minister Churchill’s birthday

today, was the first of the part at which Prime Minister Churchill's birthday was celebrated on November 30

He rose to every toast to clink glasses and delivered six separate toasts in which he stressed his friendship with President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill.

The birthday party menu included soup, boiled salmon and trout from the Caspian Sea, turkey, Persian Lantern Ice, and cheese soufflé. A small white-iced birthday cake followed on which there were 69 candles in V-formation. French and Persian wines accompanied the meal, at which Churchill's daughter, the only woman present, acted as hostess. The party lasted until midnight.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1811: USA

From the journal of Wilson Price Hunt's overland expedition in 1811–1812:

On the 30th the mountains further narrowed the river channel. The heights were covered with pines and snow. We could advance only with the greatest difficulty because of the sharp rocks, and the precipices plunge to the very banks of the river that here flows northeast and then north northwest. We killed a black-tailed deer which gave us an excellent meal. (28 miles)

1853: Africa

David Livingstone, on his Great Trans-African Journey, is at Gonye Falls, and describes their usual meal at this part of the trip.

Coffee again and a biscuit and a piece of coarse bread made of maize meal, or that of the native corn, make up the bill of fare for the evening, unless we have been fortunate enough to kill something, when we boil a potful of flesh. That is done by cutting it up into long strips and pouring on water till it is covered. When that is boiled dry the meat is considered ready.

THE MAN WHO MINDED HIS BELLY

Samuel Johnson was a famous London personality and lexicographer was a man who “minded his belly very much’ Many of his encounters with and about food are mentioned in the accounts written by his biographer, James Boswell, and many of these are included in this book. Johnson died on December 13, 1784. It appears that his appetite remained healthy almost to the end of his life.

Sir John Hawkins wrote on this day, less than two weeks before the great man’s death: “I saw him in the evening, and found him cheerful. Was informed that he had, for his dinner, eaten heartily of a French duck pie and a pheasant.”

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1638: Herefordshire, England

Lady Brilliana Harley wrote regularly to her son Edward while he was at Oxford, and often sent parcels of food.

Deare Ned, if you would have any thinge, send me word; or if I thought a coolde pye, or such a thinge, would be of any plesure to you, I would send it to you. But your father says you care not for it, and Mrs Pirson tells me, when her sonne was at Oxforde, and shee sent him such thinges, he prayed her that shee would not.

1666: London

From the diary of Samuel Pepys: “Here I had a noble and costly dinner for them, dressed by a man cooke, as the other day was.”

1711: America

From the diary of William Byrd of Westover, Virginia:

I rose about 7 o’clock and read nothing because I prepared for my journey home. However I said my prayers and ate boiled milk for breakfast. . . . In the evening I ate two partridges for my supper and spent the rest of the evening in talking about all the affairs of the neighborhood.

1784: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde. It is Tithe Audit Day and he entertains his farmers.

They were mightly pleased with their Entertainment but few dined in the Parlour. They that dined in the Kitchen had not Punch or Wine, but Strong Beer and Table Beer, and would not come into the Parlour to have Punch &c. I gave them for Dinner some Salt Fish, a Leg of Mutton boiled and Capers, a fine Loin of Beef roasted and plenty of plumb and plain Puddings.

1813: London

From the *Letters and Journals of Lord Byron*, a letter with evidence of his eating disorder:

Sunday, I dined with the Lord Holland in St. James's Square. Large party. . . . Stuffed myself with sturgeon, and exceeded in champagne and wine in general, but not to confusion of head. When I *do* dine, I gorge like an Arab or a Boa snake, on fish and vegetables, but no meat. I am always better, however, on my tea and biscuit than any other regimen, and even *that* sparingly.

1855: USA

From the Journal of Henry D. Thoreau: "William Wheeler says that he went a-spearing on the 28th and, besides pouts and pickerel, caught two great suckers. He had one of the last stuffed and baked for Thanksgiving, and made himself sick by eating too heartily of it."

December

December 1

FOOD & WAR

1941: Britain, World War II

Points-based rationing was introduced for some items as of this day. Food rationing had been in force since January 8, 1940 for many staple foods such as meat, butter, and sugar, and the new system was run alongside this for tinned meats, fish, and beans. Each person was allowed 16 “points” per month, to be used as desired (subject to availability of course) for the purchase of these articles. There were three types of coupons in the ration books, and four of each were allowed per person, per four weeks. The sixteen points were made up of A (1 point each), B (1 point each) and C (2 points each.) As an example:

Foods requiring 16 coupons per 1lb. net included:

- Solid pack canned meats (other than corned beef, corned mutton, and corned pork) such as Tongues; Briskets; Australian Minced Meat Loaf; New Zealand Canned Rabbit; Eire Stewed Steak; U.S.A. Luncheon Meat; Canned Pork; Canned Sausage Meat.
- Canned Salmon; Crawfish (or Crayfish); Lobster; Crab; Tunny; Sardines.

Foods requiring 12 points per 1 lb. net included:

- All other canned fish (mainly herrings and pilchards.)

Food requiring 8 points per 1 lb. net included:

- All canned home-produced meat products (other than pastes and soups) and Eire ready meals; Ready meals; Meat rolls; Galantines

Food requiring 4 points per 1 lb. net included:

- Canned beans in sauces or gravy—home-produced and imported.

It was announced that tinned herrings would soon disappear from the home market, as future supplies were to be diverted to the Forces at home and abroad.

DON'T EAT THE PETS

1999: Russia

The Duma (the lower house of parliament) voted 273 to 1 to pass an animal rights bill that explicitly prohibited people from eating their “animal companions,” killing them for their fur, injuring them for the purposes of movies or advertisements, or performing “unnecessary operations” on them (although sterilization or contraception for pets was mandated.)

Animal rights activist, actress Brigid Bardot had urged Russia to pass the bill, which would also have put an end to the hunting of seals for their fur.

Vladimir Putin, in office less than a week, vetoed the bill on January 6, 2000

FOOD SAFETY

1900: Manchester, England

Four people died on this day in Britain, from consuming beer contaminated with arsenic derived from sulphuric acid used in the production of invert sugar. The death toll eventually reached 70, with 6000 suffering chronic arsenic poisoning. (See January 8.)

BRIBERY FOR BEER

1757: London

Berrow's Worcester Journal contained the following intriguing letter suggesting an attempt at bribery of government officials over the price of beer: “LONDON, *Thursday, Dec. 1.* Tis said the *Chiefs* of the present *Combination of Brewers* have offer'd to raise One Hundred Thousand Pounds, if the Government will consent to bring in a Bill to fix the Price of Beer; which was refused.”

FOOD & DIPLOMACY

1943: Teheran, Iran

The Declaration of Three Powers was signed by the Allied leaders (Churchill, Stalin, and Franklin Roosevelt) on this at the Tehran Conference. It is said that FDR offered Stalin a martini and asked him to join him in a toast, and that Stalin's reply was "Well, all right, but it is cold on the stomach."

The martini has been called "America's gift to the world," and FDR's presidency was by some referred to as the "four martinis and let's have an agreement" era.

A SURFEIT OF LAMPREYS

1135: England

King Henry I of England died on this day, reputedly from "a surfeit of lampreys." Henry, at sixty-eight years of age, appeared in good health when he planned a hunting trip in Lyons-la-Forêt in Normandy, France, in late November 1135. Contrary to his doctors' orders, he ate a good quantity of lampreys (a favorite food) after his return from the hunt and became ill during the night, dying seven days later.

The lampreys would have been cooked in a "pie"—or rather, a pastry "coffin," which functioned as a baking dish in medieval times. Lampreys are an eel-like fish high in oil.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769: Polynesia

From the *Endeavour* Journal of Joseph Banks: "'Oohoorage.' At night we came to an anchor in a small open bay; our fishing lines were tried and we soon caught a large number of fish which were called by the seamen Sea bream, as many as I believe the ship's company could eat in 2 days."

1811: USA

From the journal of Wilson Price Hunt's overland expedition in 1811–1812: “On December 1 it rained in the valley and snowed in the mountains. As I climbed them to look for a passageway, I found the snow knee deep. I saw many black cherries that were delicious probably because the frost had cut their tartness.”

1832: Tierra Del Fuego

From the Journal of Syms Covington, assistant to Charles Darwin on the voyage of the Beagle:

Moored ship December 1st in deep water at Good Success Bay, Tierra Del Fuego. . . . On the mountain heights one finds plenty of guanacos [*Lama guanicoe*], which are very shy. Their flesh is very good eating but dry. Both on the high and low woods there are great many birds of different species and by the sea, there are plenty of geese, ducks, and seals.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1661: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys: “We have this day cut a brave Coller of Brawne from Winchcombe, which proves very good, and also opened the glass of Girkins which Capt. Cock did give to my wife the other day, which are rare things.”

1663: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys. He attended a trial on this day which related to two crimes—a shipping insurance fraud and a butter cargo fraud:

After dinner I to Guild Hall to hear a tryall at King's Bench, before Lord Chief Justice Hide, about the insurance of a ship, the same I mention in my yesterday's journall, where everything was proved how money was so taken up upon bottomary and insurance, and the ship left by the master and seamen upon rocks, where, when the sea fell at the ebb, she must perish. The master was offered helpe, and he did give the pilotts 20 sols to drink to

bid them go about their business, saying that the rocks were old, but his ship was new, and that she was repaired for L6 and less all the damage that she received, and is now brought by one, sent for on purpose by the insurers, into the Thames, with her cargo, vessels of tallow daubed over with butter, instead of all butter, the whole not worth above L500, ship and all, and they had took up, as appeared, above L2,400.

1795: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde:

This being my Tithe-Audit Day—the following Farmers &c. paid me their respective Composition and dined at my House afterwards. . . . I gave them for Dinner, the best part of a Rump of Beef, a slip-Marrow bone of Beef, both boiled, a Leg of Mutton boiled & Capers, a fine Surloin of Beef, Salt Fish, a Couple of Rabbits boiled and Onion Sauce & plumb and plain Puddings in plenty. Small beer and strong, Punch and Wine as much as they pleased to make use off—Strong Beer amazingly liked and drank in great Quantity, six Bottles of Rum made into Punch, one Dozen of Lemons, and about five Bottles of Port Wine drank today. They were all extremely well pleased with their Entertainment and very harmonious.

1798: England

Jane Austen to her sister Cassandra: “*Steventon*: Mr. Lyford was here yesterday; he came while we were at dinner, and partook of our elegant entertainment. I was not ashamed at asking him to sit down to table, for we had some pease-soup, a sparerib, and a pudding.”

1789: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde:

It being my Tithe Audit Day. . . . The following farmers dined and stayed till after 12 at Night at my *House* (*he lists 21 names*). . . . We had for Dinner, some Salt Fish, a Couple of boiled Rabbits and Onions, a boiled Leg of Mutton, boiled Beef and rost Beef and plumb Puddings. . . . There was drank, about half a Dozen Bottles of Port Wine, 8 Bottles of Rum,

besides much strong Beer, as they wished to have.

DECEMBER 2

A DECISION OVER DINNER

1936: Britain

On December 2, 1936, King Edward VIII met with Prime Minister Baldwin to discuss the potential crisis caused by his relationship with Wallis Simpson. Wallis was American, and divorced—two reasons why she was considered absolutely unsuitable as the wife of an English king. Edward returned from the meeting and had dinner with Wallis, her cousin Newbold Noyes and Aunt Bessie. Over the following meal, he apparently announced his decision to marry Wallis, no matter what the consequences.

Clear Turtle Soup

Lobster Mousse with Light Piquant Sauce

Roast Pheasant

Potatoes Soufflé Mixed Green Salad

Bordeaux Wine

Frozen Fresh Pineapple and Toasted Cheese Savory

Coffee and Liqueur

The King's decision was, as is well known, to choose the woman he loved over the throne. He formally abdicated on December 10, becoming the first British monarch ever to do so.

FOOD & WAR

1870: The Siege of Paris

From the *Diary of a Besieged Resident*, by Henry Labouchere:

Food is becoming more scarce every day. Yesterday all our sausages were requisitioned. We have still got the cows to fall back on, but they are kept to the last for the sake of their milk. They are fed on oats, as hay is scarce. So you see the mother of a calf has many advantages over its uncle. All the animals in the Zoological Gardens have been killed except the monkeys; these are kept alive from a vague and Darwinian notion that they are our relatives, or at least the relatives of some of the members of the Government, to whom in the matter of beauty nature has not been bountiful. In the cellar of the English Embassy there are three sheep. Never did the rich man lust more after the poor man's ewe lamb than I lust after these sheep. I go and look at them frequently, much as a London Arab goes to have a smell at a cookshop. They console me for the absence of my ambassador. Some one has discovered that an excellent jelly can be made out of old bones, and we are called upon by the mayors to give up all our bones, in order that they may be submitted to the process. Mr. Powell is, I believe, a contractor in London. I do not know him; but yesterday I dined with a friend who produced from a tin some Australian mutton, which he had bought of Mr. Powell before the commencement of the siege. Better I never tasted, and out of gratitude I give the worthy Powell the benefit of a gratis advertisement. If we only had a stock of his meat here, we could defy the Prussians. As it is, I am very much afraid that in a very few weeks William will date his telegrams to Augusta from the Tuileries.

COFFEE

1666: France

Adrien-Thomas Perdou de Subligny, an actor and writer, wrote a short poem in praise of coffee in this days edition of his small publication *La Muse de la Cour* (The Muse of the Court.) He extolled the medicinal qualities of this new, exotic, and fashionable "Turkish Liqueur," saying it "heals within the time of an Avé Maria, what the rest cannot heal in a year." He also recommended it for those couples in need of a little assistance with their love lives, as "For a woman it works miracles / When her husband drinks it."

THE POTATO

16 21:America

The first potatoes were sent to North America on this day. The English had taken potatoes to Bermuda, where they thrived, in 1613. On December 2, 1621, two cedar chests of produce from Bermuda were shipped to Governor Francis Wyatt of Virginia at Jamestown. Captain Nathaniel Butler, then governor of Bermuda, wrote a history of the islands, and in it he describes the contents of the chests:

[A]ll sortes of the country plants and fruicts, as Virginia at the time and until then had not, as figs, pomegranates, oranges, lemons, plantanes, [plantains] sugar canes, potatoes, and cassada [cassava] rootes, papes [papaya], red-pepper, pritle pear [prickly pear] and the like.

Thus, the potato and the red pepper—natives of the South American continent—reached North America via England and Bermuda.

A RECORD APPLE-EATER

1961: USA

Bozo Miller (1918–2008) of Oakland, CA, became a “Guinness Book Immortal” on this day when he ate 63 Dutch apple pies in 60 minutes at the Montana State Fair. The editors of the *Guinness Book of Records* eliminated the eating records section in 1990. In the 1981 edition, it was claimed that Miller had remained undefeated since 1931.

In spite of his intake of up to 25,000 calories a day, he lived to the age of 89. His other feats include eating 27 two-pound chickens in one sitting (1963), 324 ravioli (1963), and 1000 packets of potato chips,

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1811: USA

From the journal of Wilson Price Hunt’s overland expedition in 1811–1812: “We were compelled to rest in camp on the 2nd. The evening before we had caught a beaver, but as we had nothing more to eat I killed another horse.”

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia.

He and his party are in Kakadu in Australia's "Top End" and are the recipients of the hospitality of the local Aboriginal tribes.

The natives were remarkably kind and attentive, and offered us the rind of the rose-coloured *Eugenia* apple, the cabbage of the *Seaforthia* palm, a fruit which I did not know, and the nut-like swelling of the rhizoma of either a grass or a sedge. The last had a sweet taste, was very mealy and nourishing, and the best article of the food of the natives we had yet tasted. They called it "Allamurr" (the natives of Port Essington, "Murnatt"), and were extremely fond of it. The plant grew in depressions of the plains, where the boys and young men were occupied the whole day in digging for it. The women went in search of other food; either to the sea-coast to collect shell-fish,—and many were the broad paths which led across the plains from the forest land to the salt-water—or to the brushes to gather the fruits of the season, and the cabbage of the palms. The men armed with a wommala, and with a bundle of goose spears, made of a strong reed or bamboo (?), gave up their time to hunting. It seemed that they speared the geese only when flying; and would crouch down whenever they saw a flight of them approaching: the geese, however, knew their enemies so well, that they immediately turned upon seeing a native rise to put his spear into the throwing stick. Some of my companions asserted that they had seen them hit their object at the almost incredible distance of 200 yards: but, making all due allowance for the guess, I could not help thinking how formidable they would have been had they been enemies instead of friends. They remained with us the whole afternoon; all the tribe and many visitors, in all about seventy persons, squatting down with crossed legs in the narrow shades of the trunks of trees, and shifting their position as the sun advanced. Their wives were out in search of food; but many of their children were with them, which they duly introduced to us. They were fine, stout, well made men, with pleasing and intelligent countenances. One or two attempts were made to rob us of some trifles; but I was careful; and we avoided the unpleasant necessity of showing any discontent on that head. As it grew late, and they became hungry, they rose, and explained that they were under the necessity of leaving us, to go and satisfy their hunger; but that they

would shortly return, and admire, and talk again. They went to the digging ground, about half a mile in the plain, where the boys were collecting Allamurr, and brought us a good supply of it; in return for which various presents were made to them. We became very fond of this little tuber: and I dare say the feast of Allamurr with Eooanberry's and Minorelli's tribe will long remain in the recollection of my companions. They brought us also a thin grey snake, about four feet long, which they put on the coals and roasted. It was poisonous, and was called "Yullo."

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1660: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

Lord's day. My head not very well, and my body out of order by last night's drinking, which is my great folly. To church, and Mr. Mills made a good sermon; so home to dinner. My wife and I all alone to a leg of mutton, the sawce of which being made sweet, I was angry at it, and eat none, but only dined upon the marrow bone that we had beside. To church in the afternoon, and after sermon took Tom Fuller's Church History and read over Henry the 8th's life in it, and so to supper and to bed.

1783: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde:

This being my Tithe Audit Day, the following People attended, and paid me every thing that was due. . . . I gave them for Dinner a Leg of Mutton boiled, and Capers, some Salt Fish, plenty of plumb Puddings and a Couple of boiled Rabbitts, with a fine large Surloin of Beef rosted. Plenty of Wine, Punch and Strong Beer after Dinner till 10 o'clock.

DECEMBER 3

DINNER AT THE AMERICAN CLUB

1934: London, England

The American Club entertained Lord Macmillan at dinner on this day. Hugh Pattison Macmillan was a Scottish judge who served briefly as minister of information at the outbreak of the Second World War.

Menu

Smoked Salmon

Oysters

Sole Meuniere

Tournedo Choron

Fried Chicken

Duchess Potatoes

Brussels Sprouts

Asparagus

Baked Alaska

Roes on Toast

Coffee

The menu demonstrates the persisting English tradition of a small savory dish to end the meal—in this case, the Roes on Toast.

DINNER IN PHILADELPHIA

1788: America

At the St Andrew's Society of Philadelphia dinner the 45 gentlemen present consumed: "38 bottles of Claret, 8 bottles of Port wine, 2 bowls of punch, plus Welsh rabbit, bread and cheese."

COCOA ON THE BUSES

1897: London, England

On December 3, 1897, each lady riding on a Road Car Bus or Balls Bros. Bus was given a sample tin of cocoa in an promotional campaign. Two hundred thousand samples were given out by conductors.

FOOD & WAR

1918: France, World War I

Future president Harry Truman was on active military duty France, and while he was away he wrote regularly to his sweetheart and future wife, Bess Wallace.

Monte Carlo, Monaco

Dear Bess,

I am having a very enjoyable vacation, as I told you in a letter day before yesterday. The whole bunch of us went to Monte Carlo day before yesterday and stayed all night. . . . No French theater is complete without a fine bar and a beautiful room to drink in. Everyone, men, women, and children, are frequenters and every show gives thirty-minute intermissions between each act so the audience can go out and quench its thirst, which it does en masse. I'll bet that this country drinks enough wine to float the British navy every month. They use water only to wash in and if a man wants water to drink with his meals, they think he needs a doctor or something.

1940: Britain, World War II

The food minister announced a temporary increase in the rations of sugar and tea, in time for the Christmas season. As of December 16, the sugar ration was to be increased from 8 oz to 12 oz. and the tea increased from 2 oz. to 4 oz. per week.

An official of the Ministry of Food warned that "after Christmas, plainer living will be the rule." This warning might mean that some households must forgo certain

will be the rule, snippets that might previously have brought meat, fruits, and other foods were needed to transport airplanes, tanks and guns. It was expected that tinned fruits would become even more expensive, but there was no intention to control prices of these as the Ministry considered them a luxury food. Increased orange imports were, however, to be made to allow for marmalade-making.

FOOD SAFETY

1853: USA

The *Scientific American* published on this day included a letter and comments on the dangers of some non-yeast leavening agents.

Hydrochlorate of Soda in Bread

Will you allow me just room enough to warn your readers against a very plausible recipe for making bread with muriatic acid and soda? It would be a nice recipe if the muriatic acid were pure. But I have found, from six years experience in using it in cooking, (confirmed now by an assay of Dr. A. A. Hayes) that it contains, as ordinarily made, lead enough to give a man very severe dyspepsia, accompanied with pain in the bowels, weariness and low spirits. Three years ago, my physician told me I must be taking lead in some form; but I did not then suspect my muriatic acid of containing it. Dr. Hayes assay has, however, shown me how difficult it is, sometimes, for us to detect the exact source of an admitted evil.

[The above is from the Boston Traveller, and should be a caution to all housekeepers. It was supposed by many that as the combination of muriatic acid (hydro-chloric acid) with soda formed common salt, liberating carbonic acid gas in the act of union, that these were the best substances which could be employed in making bread by instantaneous raisings. It is difficult, however, to obtain pure acid, and the impure cannot be used with safety. After much consideration of the subject, we believe that raised bread made by any other process than vinous fermentation not effervescence is neither sweet nor healthy.]

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1907: USA

Reinhold Burger, of Berlin, Germany, assignor to the Thermos Bottle Company of New York, was granted Patent No. 872, 795 for a “Double-walled Vessel with a Space for a Vacuum Between the Walls”—in other words, a thermos flask.

The vacuum flask was actually invented by the Scottish scientist, Sir James Dewar, in 1892 (hence its other name of the Dewar flask.) Unfortunately, Dewar did not patent his invention, and although he challenged the Thermos Bottle Company over the issue, he was unsuccessful, and made no profit from it.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1802: Australia

Matthew Flinders in *Investigator* discovered The Bountiful Islands in the Gulf of Carpentaria. The name was given because of the abundant supply of turtles which provided food for many days. “Sent an officer and party on short to turn turtle during the night. . . . During the morning rec’d on board 25 turtle, the smallest of which weighed above 250 lbs. . . . Employed in various duties principally in securing turtle. ”

1864: Australia

The Jardine brothers, Frank and Alexander were driving a mob of cattle on a fourteen hundred kilometer journey to the tip of Cape York.

Hitherto the grass had been so scanty that the party could not halt for a day to kill. They had consequently been four days without meat. It was determined, therefore, to stop and kill a beast, preparatory to a start north, the feed having slightly improved in common with the timber. In addition to the steer that was slaughtered, a shovel-nosed shark was caught and jerked in like manner with the beef.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1737: America

John Wesley, having been in America and “having preached the gospel there (‘not as I ought, but as I was able’) one year and nearly nine months” is

attempting to leave the region, but he and his companions have become lost in the woods.

It now grew toward sunset; so we sat down, faint and weary, having had no food all day, except a gingerbread cake, which I had taken in my pocket. A third of this we had divided among us at noon; another third we took now; the rest we reserved for the morning; but we had met with no water all the day.

1776: England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde. He again recorded the details of Tithe Audit Day. On this occasion he fed 17 people.

My Frolic for my People to pay Tithe to me was this day. I gave them a good dinner, surloin of Beef roasted, a Leg of Mutton boiled and plumb Puddings in plenty. . . . Every Person well pleased, and were very happy indeed. They had to drink Wine, Punch, and Ale as much as they pleased; they drank of wine 6 Bottles, of Rum 1 gallon and half, and I know not what ale.

1782: England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde:

This being the Day for my Tithe Audit, the folowing Farmers paid me their Tithes. . . . They all dined here. . . . I gave them for Dinner, some Salt Fish, a Leg of Mutton boiled and Capers, a Knuckle of Veal, a Piggs Face, a fine Surloin of Beef roasted, and plenty of plumb Puddings. . . . Wine drank 6 Bottles. Rum drank 5 Bottles, besides Quantities of strong Beer and Ale.

DECEMBER 4

SAINT BARBARA'S DAY

Saint Barbara is a popular saint around the world. Interestingly, she is the patron saint of artillerymen, and a well-known Civil War recipe for punch is named for her.

St. Barbara's Artillery Punch

Some of previous year's punch—Represents Tradition

Red fruit drink—Represents Artillery Color

Dark Red Wine -Represent Bloodshed

Dark Rum—Represents Coming of the Storm

Golden Rum—Represents Hope of Victory

Peach Brandy—Represents “Procurement” From Officer's Stores

Molasses—Represents Axle Grease

Spring Water—Represents Importance of Fresh Water

Bourbon—Representing the Southern Gentleman's drink

Mixture of Lemon Juice and Brown Sugar—Squeezings from the Sponge

Lime Juice and Sliced Fruits—To Ward Off Scurvy

Dark Apple Cider—Represents Cleaning Water From the Guns (sponge bucket)

Rose Petals—Represents Sweethearts

Hardtack, Coffee, and Corn—Rations of the Common Soldier

Brown Sugar Mixed with Water—Represents Mud From the Battlefields

Black Licorice Cake Decoration—Represents Gun Powder

Horseshoe—Honors the Horses

Chocolate-covered Cherries—Represents Cannister Shot

Sock with Powdered Sugar—Represents Dust from Marching

Artillery Saber to Stir

A GREAT TURTLE FEAST

1883: New York

A Great Turtle Feast was held to celebrate the centenary of the Evacuation of New York by the British. Evacuation Day was November 25, 1783, and George Washington formally thanked and farewelled his troops nine days later on December 4, in the Long Room of Fraunces Tavern.

The great success of the day was due to John Austin Stevens, the main organizer of the day. It had been hoped that the festivities could be held of Evacuation Day itself in “the old revolutionary hostelry” of the Fraunces Tavern, but the manager, although offered a good price for hire of the tavern, felt he could make more money with the takings in the saloon. Consequently, the plans were organized for December 4.

The feast began at noon and ended at midnight. There were in fact, two meals served on this day in 1883. The first was a lunch to commemorate Washington’s Farewell to the Troops, and the second was a dinner at which the Sons of the Revolution (formed in 1876) was revitalized, and forty new members admitted. The menu was the same at both meals.

Sixty gentlemen were present at the evening meal:

The feast provided for the guests is one for which the old tavern was famous ; turtle soup, stilton cheese, sherry and madeira wines, and arrack punch, served in two beautiful large punch bowls with borders of blue and gold, lettered in red, a medallion of Washington in the centre. The waiters wear old fashioned English black coats, with blue neck cloths; long pipes are provided for the guests, and speech and song follow in quick succession; and when the continentals in buff and blue, strike up the old march, to the fife and drum, Mr. Stevens sings the accompanying words “We are the troops, That ne’er will stoop, to wretched slavery” midst peals of applause; and thus the Society of the Sons of the Revolution was organized, the Spirit of 1776 walked abroad that night.

A CAMERA CLUB DINNER

18 97: USA

The Camera Club of New York held a dinner at The Arena, and the menu had a photographic theme.

Oysters, on the half plate

Soup, Eiko cum Hydro

Bass, caught on the snap

Filet of Beef, non actinic

Sorbet, a la cyanide

Quail, on celluloid film

Celery, hypo fixings

Ice Cream, de formalin

Cheese, over exposed

Fruits, in focus

Coffee, one dram.

BORDEAUX INTENSIFIER,—H₂O

DILUTE TO SUIT

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769: Polynesia

From the *Endeavour* Journal of Joseph Banks:

“*Motuaro*” After breakfast we went ashore at a large Indian fort or heppah; a great number of people immediately crowded about us and sold almost a boat load of fish in a very short time. They then went and shewd us their

plantations which were very large of Yamms, Cocos, and sweet potatoes. . . . Fishing seems to be the cheif business of this part of the countrey; about all their towns are abundance of netts laid upon small heaps like hay cocks and thatcd over and almost every house you go into has netts in it making.

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

The natives returned very early to our camp. I went up to them and made them some presents; in return for which they offered me bunches of goose feathers, and the roasted leg of a goose, which they were pleased to see me eat with a voracious appetite. I asked for Allamurr, and they expressed themselves sorry in not having any left, and gave us to understand that they would supply us, if we would stay a day. Neither these natives nor the tribe of Eooanberry would touch our green hide or meat: they took it, but could not overcome their repugnance, and tried to drop it without being seen by us. Poor fellows! they did not know how gladly we should have received it back! They were the stoutest and fattest men we had met. . . . Charley, Brown, and John, had gone into the brush to a camp of flying-foxes, and returned with twelve, which we prepared for luncheon, which allowed our bullock time to recover. They gave an almost incredible account of the enormous numbers of flying-foxes, all clustering round the branches of low trees, which drooped by the weight so near to the ground that the animals could easily be killed with endgels.

HOSPITAL FOOD

1829: USA

From the Diary of Joseph Bennett (1817-31) Shoemaker of the Parish of Linkinhorne. On December 4 he noted the common diet for patients of the Devon and Exeter Hospital.

- Mon. Wed. Fri.
- Breakfast. One pint of water gruel. Bread for day 15oz.

- Dinner. One pint of rice milk.
- Supper. One pint of milk pottage on Monday. Cheese 2oz on Wednesday and One oz butter on Friday.
- Tues. Thur. Sat. Sun.
- Breakfast. One pint of water gruel with 11oz of bread for day.
- Dinner. One pint of broth, 4 oz. Mutton, 1lb potatoes.
- Supper. Cheese 2oz.

FOOD BUSINESS

1865: England

The Liebig Extract of Meat Company was established on 4 December 1865 in London, England. A factory to manufacture the extract was opened in 1866 on the banks of the Uruguay River at Villa Independencia, later called Fray Bentos. The extract was made from the flesh of cattle which would otherwise have been killed for their hides.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

17 88: Paris

Thomas Jefferson wrote to George Washington from Paris:

The consumption of rice is growing fast in this country, and that of Carolina gaining ground on every other kind. I am of opinion the whole of the Carolina rice can be consumed here. It's transportation employs 2500 sailors, almost all of them English at present; the rice being deposited at Cowes & brought from thence here. It would be dangerous to confine this transportation to French & American bottoms the ensuing year, because they will be much engrossed by the transportation of wheat & flour hither, and the crop of rice might lie on hand for want of vessels; but I see no objections to the extensions of our principle to this article also, beginning with the year 1790.

1800: England

From the *Grasmere Journals* of Dorothy Wordsworth, sister of the poet William Wordsworth: “Coleridge came just as we finished dinner—Pork from the Simpsons.”

FOOD & WAR

1854: Crimea

From Charles Usherwood’s *Service Journal*, 1852–1856. He outlines the new orders in respect of fuel for cooking:

General orders No 2 of the day, Patent fuel and charcoal as also lights for the use of the troops were ordered to be issued at the Balaklava stores, tho’ it will be well to remember that plainly as would appear by orders the Troops were better off than represented. We never had speaking of my own Corps any lights served out to us, our means being of a novel character using as we did an empty sardine tin filled with the fat from the salt pork of our rations after boiling and by placing in the fat a strip of linen or cotton torn off our own shirts to serve as a wick. As to patent fuel and charcoal it was only at a later period and when Company cooking was established that fuel was served out and this so sparingly as to be of very little use, the men having to seek their own. In the same orders but number 3, skins of dead horses were to be preserved and 2/6 for each skin properly cleaned and cured would be paid by the Commissariat of Divisions.

DECEMBER 5

CURRY FOR DINNER

1623: India

Pietro della Valle was in India, and food was prepared for him by the son of the local ruler, the Queen of Olala. He described the meal in a letter to a friend.

The Queen of Olala’s Son, who though he govern not (for the Mother

THE Queen of Siam's Son, who, though he govern not, (for the Mother administers all alone, and will do so as long as she lives) yet for honor's sake is styled King, . . . sent for the Brachman, my Interpreter, in the Morning, . . . bid him bring me to him when my convenience serv'd; for he was very desirous to see me and speak with me. This Message being related to me, I let pass the hour of dinner, (because, having no appetite, and finding my stomack heavy, I would not dine this day) and, when it seem'd a convenient time. . . . He earnestly desir'd of me that I would stay awhile till some meat were prepar'd for me; for by all means he would have me eat something in his House. . . .

. . . The meat was not long in preparing, and, it being now in order, the King call'd for me again to enter into the room where it stood ready . . . where they had prepared a little square board of the bigness of an ordinary stool, which might serve for a single person, but raised no more than four fingers above the ground ; upon this I sat down, crossing my Legs one over the other; and that little elevation helped me to keep them out from under me, with such decency as I desired. Right before the seat, upon the bare floor, (the Indians not using any Tables) they had spread, instead of a dish, (as their custom is, especially with us Christians, with whom they will not defile their own vessels ; it not being lawful for them ever to eat again in those wherein we have eaten) a great Leaf of that Tree which the Arabians and Persians call Mouza [Musa: the plantain or banana] the Portugals in India Fichi d'India, Indian Fig-trees; and upon the said Leaf they had lay'd a good quantity of Rice, boyl'd, after their manner, onely with water and salt ; but for sauce to it there stood on one side a little vessel made of Palm-eaves, full of very good butter melted. There lay also upon another Leaf one of those Indian Figgs, clean and pared; and hard by it a quantity of a certain red herb, commonly eaten in India, and call'd by the Portugals Brèdo, [perhaps the tomato?] (which yet is the general appellation of all sort of herbs). In another place lay several fruits us'd by them, and, amongst the rest, slices of the Bambù or great Indian Cane; all of them preserved in no bad manner, which they call Acciaò [Achar] besides one sort pickled with Vinegar, as our Olives are. Bread there was none, because they use none, but the Rice is instead of it; which was no great defect to me, because I am now accustom'd to do without it, and eat very little. The King very earnestly pray'd me to eat, excusing himself often that he gave me so small an entertainment on the sudden; for if he had known my coming beforehand he would have prepared many Carils and divers other more pleasing meats.

Caril is a name which in India they give to certain Broths made with Butter, the Pulp of Indian Nuts, (instead of which in our Countries Almond Milk may be us'd, being equally good and of the same virtue) and all sorts of Spices, particularly Cardamoms and Ginger, (which we use but little) besides herbs, fruits and a thousand other condiments. The Christians, who eat everything, add Flesh, or Fish, of all sorts, especially Hens, or Chickens, cut in small pieces, sometimes Eggs, which, without doubt, make it more savory: with all which things is made a kind of Broth, like our Guazetti or Pottages, and it may be made in many several ways; this Broth, with all the abovesaid ingredients, is afterwards poured in good quantity upon the boyled Rice, whereby is made a well-tasted mixture, of much substance and light digestion, as also with very little pains; for it is quickly boyled, and serves both for meat and bread together. I found it very good for me, and used it often, as also the Pilào elsewhere spoken of, and made of Rice and butter boyled with it and flesh fryed therein, besides a thousand other preparations of several sorts which are so common to everybody in Asia; and I account it one of the best and wholesomest meats that can be eaten in the world, without so many Artificial Inventions as our guttlings of Europe (withall procuring to themselves a thousand infirmities of Gouts, Catarrhs and other Maladies, little known to the Orientals) daily devise to the publick damage.

But to return to my Relation, the King told me he would have given me a better entertainment, but yet desired me to receive this small extemporary one, and eat without any respect, or shyness of those that were present; for thereby he should understand that I liked it. I answer'd that the Favour and Courtesie which his Highness shewed me was sufficient: but as for eating, the time being now past, I did it onely to obey him; and so, to comply with him, although I had little will to eat, I tasted lightly here and there of those fruits and herbs, wherewith my Hand was a little soiled, which upon occasion I wiped with my handkerchief, being they use no other Table-linnen, nor had any laid for me. The King, seeing that I touched not the Rice, spoke to me several times to eat of it, and to pour upon it some of that butter which stood by it prepared. I did not, because I would not grease myself, there being no Spoon; for the Indians eat every thing with the Hand alone and so do the Portugals.

MARK TWAIN'S BIRTHDAY DINNER

1905: New York

Mark Twain's birthday was November 30, but he had a belated celebration at Delmonico's on this evening with "Fellow-Workers in Fiction." The *New York Times* described the event, and commented that "Roosevelt Sends Congratulations" and "A particular feature of the dinner was the strength of the feminine contingent". It also included an extract from his after-dinner speech, in which he gave some of the secrets of his living so long.

In the matter of diet—which is another main thing—I have been persistently strict in sticking to the things which didn't agree with me until one or the other got the best of it myself. But last Spring I stopped frolicking with mince pie after midnight; up to then I had always believed it wasn't loaded. For thirty years I have taken coffee and bread at 8 in the morning, and no bite nor sup till 7:30 in the evening. Eleven hours. That is all right for me. Headachy people would not reach 70 comfortably by that road. And I wish to urge upon you this—which I think is wisdom—that if you find you can't make 70 by any but an uncomfortable road, don't you go. When they take off the Pullman and retire you to the rancid smoker, put on your things, count your checks, and get out at the first way station where there's a cemetery.

As for drinking, I have no rule about that. When the others drink I like to help; otherwise I remain dry, by habit and preference. This dryness does not hurt me, but it could easily hurt you, because you are different. You let it alone.

AGRICULTURE

1791: USA

President George Washington prepared what is considered to be the first official American crop report. Washington had maintained a correspondence with Arthur Young, the editor of the English journal, *Annals of Agriculture* since 1786. Young had initially written to Washington for information on American crops, and in response Washington had personally conducted a mail survey, asking eight questions on crop types, modes of husbandry. An enormous amount of information had already been shared over the years, and the results of

Washington's survey were annexed to the letter of this day. In the letter, Washington sums up what he sees as the explanation for the difference in agricultural practices between the two countries.

An English farmer must entertain a contemptible opinion of our husbandry; or a horrid idea of our lands, when he shall be informed that not more than 8 or 10 bushels of wheat is the yield of an acre; but this low produce may be ascribed, and principally too, to [the fact that] the aim of the farmers of this country (if they can be called farmers) is not to make the most they can from the land, which is, or has been cheap, but the most of the labour which is dear, the consequence of which has been, much ground has been scratched over & none cultivated our improved as it ought to have been, whereas a farmer in England, where land is dear and labour cheap, finds it his interest to improve and cultivate highly, that he may reap large crops from a small quantity of ground.

FOOD & WAR

18 70: The Siege of Paris

From the *Diary of the Besieged Resident in Paris*, by Mr. Henry Labouchere:

The following is a list of the prices of "luxuries:"—Terrines of chicken, 16f; of rabbit, 13f; a fowl, 26f; a rabbit, 18f; a turkey, 60f; a goose, 45f; one cauliflower, 3f; one cabbage, 4f; dog is 2f. a lb.; a cat skinned costs 5f.; a rat, 1f., if fat from the drains, 1f. 50c.

Almost all the animals in the *Jardin d'Acclimatation* have been eaten. They have averaged about 7f. a lb. Kangaroo, however, has been sold for 12f. the lb. Yesterday I dined with the correspondent of a London paper. He had managed to get a large piece of mutton, an animal which is, I believe, only found in Corsica. I can only describe it by saying that it tasted of mutton, and nothing else. Without being absolutely bad, I do

not think that I shall take up my residence in Corsica, in order habitually to feed upon it.

WINE HISTORY

1985: London, England

The highest price ever achieved for a bottle of wine was realised on this day at Christie's in London. It was a 1787 Chateau Lafite (spelled "Lafitte" at the time,) said to have been owned by Thomas Jefferson, and it was sold for 105,000 pounds after only two minutes bidding. The bottle was made from hand-blown dark-green glass sealed with black wax. Etched into the glass, along with the vintage and the name of the wine were the letters "Th.J."

The bottle was one of a number of premium wines from various vineyards that were found in bricked-up cellar in Paris, where Thomas Jefferson spent a number of years. He was known to be an avid wine enthusiast and buyer,

The level of the wine was "exceptionally high" for such an old bottle—just half an inch below the cork—and the color "remarkably deep for its age." But it was not bought to drink, but as a piece of Jefferson memorabilia.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1802: Australia

Matthew Flinders, aboard *the Investigator*, in the Bountiful Islands. In the Gulf of Carpentaria. The party had been catching large numbers of turtles for days. On this day he wrote:

Received on board 18 more turtle by the boats, and afterwards hoisted in the launch. The number of turtle received amounts to 46, whose average weight may be 300 lbs each. . . . No marks of natives were seen, and the great number of turtle almost sufficiently evince that they never visit the island. Above high-water mark, the sand is full of holes where they turtle have some time probably laid their eggs A swarm of young turtle ones was found in one of these, and eggs in another; and in the two turtle that were killed this morning, vast such numbers of eggs were found that every body had enough. In some that were killed afterwards, from 4 to 700 eggs were found. . . . Employed stowing them in the hold, in the launch, and about the upper deck: after which it was too late to get under weigh. . . . Mustered the ships company and saw them clean.—Turtle served out to the people and as usual lime-juice and sugar in their grog.

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

When the natives became hungry, they ate the lower part of the leaf-stalks of Nelumbium, after stripping off the external skin. They threw a great number of them over to us, and I could not help making a rather ridiculous comparison of our situation, and our hosts, with that of the English ambassador in China, who was treated also with Nelumbium by its rich Mandarins.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1661: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

This morning I went early to the Paynter's and there sat for my picture the fourth time, but it do not yet please me, which do much trouble me. Thence to the Treasury Office, where I found Sir W. Batten come before me, and there we sat to pay off the St. George. By and by came Sir W. Pen, and he and I staid while Sir W. Batten went home to dinner, and then he came again, and Sir W. Pen and I went and dined at my house, and had two mince pies sent thither by our order from the messenger Slater, that had dressed some victuals for us, and so we were very merry.

1786: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde:

This being my day for the Tithe Audit the following Farmers dined and spent the afternoon and Evening till after 10 o'clock at night. . . . We had for Dinner, Salt Fish, a Leg of Mutton boiled and Capers, boiled and roast Beef and plenty of plumb and plain Puddings—Punch, Wine and Strong Beer after Dinner. There was six Bottles of Rum made into Punch, 3 Bowls, 2 Bottles of Rum in each. There was seven Bottles of Wine—great Quantities of strong Beer—99 Lemons—1 Pd and ½ of Sugar and half a Pound of Tobacco made use of

DECEMBER 6

SAINT NICHOLAS DAY

Saint Nicholas is one of the major influences on the secular image of “Santa Claus,” and his day is especially celebrated in Scandinavia and other European countries. The food traditions of the day are as varied as the countries and cultures where he is a favorite state, but some of them are:

In Holland, the dish of the day is *Runderlappen* (spiced stewing steak).

In Switzerland “bread men” with raisins for eyes, called *Grittibänzen* or *bonhommes de pate* appear in the bakeries. Also in Switzerland, a special beer called *Samichlaus* is brewed once a year on this day, and released on the same day the following year.

CIVIL WAR THANSGIVING

1862: USA

George Grenville Benedict of the Twelfth Regiment Vermont Volunteers wrote a report of the belated Thanksgiving celebrations in Camp Vermont.

Thanksgiving was the second “big thing” of the past fortnight. It was not quite what it would have been had the six or seven tons of good things sent to different companies from Vermont arrived in season; but it was emphatically a gay and festive time. The day was clear, air cool and bracing, sunshine bright and invigorating. The boys of our company made some fun over their Thanksgiving breakfast of hard tack and cold beans, but possessed their souls in patience in view of the forthcoming feast of fat things, for we had heard that our boxes from home were at Alexandria, and the wagons had gone for them.

. . . Our Thanksgiving boxes came yesterday after the regiment had gone out on picket . . . and the few men left behind in camp have been sampling some of the more perishable articles, though booths of brush and picket fires almost extinguished by the snow, are hardly what one would choose as

surroundings.

The Thanksgiving dinner of the officers' mess of Company C came off to-day, and was a highly select and recherché affair. The board was spread in the capacious log shanty of Maj. Kingsley and was graced by the presence of the amiable wife of Col. Blunt, who has been domiciled in camp for a week or two, and of the field and staff officers of the Twelfth and the chaplain and surgeon of the Fifteenth. I enclose a copy of the bill of fare, in the composition of which I suspect my editorial brother, of the quartermaster's department, had a hand. It was engrossed on brown wrapping paper, like the Southern newspapers, and everything on the bill was on the boards, sumptuous as it may seem. The good things said I do not feel at liberty to report.

BILL OF FARE.

—

Shanty de Kingsley,

—

THANKSGIVING DINNER.

—

Camp Vermont, December 6th, 1862.

—

TABLE D'HOTE.

—

SOUP.

Navy [bean?]

ROAST.

Turkey, Mount Vernon Sauce.

ENTREES.

Pate de pullet, Cochon Sauce.

Fillet de Boeuf—a la smoke

RELISHES

Butter, Chittenden Co., Kohl Slaw

Cheese, Stationary, Chow Chow.

Salt, ordinaire, Sultana Sauce

Pepper, a la contraband Tomato Catsup

Pickles, a la confusion. Sauce de Savoy

VEGETABLES

Potatoes, Hibernian and Carolinian.

Onions, aux fragantes

Pastry

Mince pie. Apple pie.

DESSERT

Coffee, Doughnuts, Ginger-Schnapps,

Sweet Cakes, Fruit Cake,

Apples, Baldwin.

FOOD & WAR

19 47: Britain, Post–World War II

Two years after the war ended, rationing of staples such as oats, barley, and canned meat products began. The *Times* reported:

Smaller Home Crops

The Minister of Food has included oatmeal, oat flour, white groats, brown groats, oatcakes, and barley products in the points rationing scheme, and has increased the points value of oatflakes. Production of home-grown oats in 1947 is estimated provisionally at 2,451,000 tons, compared with 2,903,000 tons in 1946. Unfavourable growing weather is blamed for the smaller harvest, and for the fact that this year's barley crop in the United Kingdom is provisionally estimated at 1,636,000 tons, compared with 1,963,000 tons last year.

. . . Points values are increased for oatflakes, dried peas, green split peas, and lentils and split lentils.

A reduction has been made in the points values for imported canned plums (including prunes, damsons, and greengages), imported canned marmalade (1½ lb). and grapefruit marmalade (2 lb. and 1 ½ lb.)

Points values have been fixed for canned veal and ham loaf and for canned portk brawn in 4 lb. containers. Supplies of these products will be very small.

FOOD BUSINESS

1883: London, England

The famous London store Harrods was entirely destroyed by fire on this day, but Christmas deliveries were still made on time. New premises were built on the site, and the well-known mission statement “Everything for Everybody Everywhere” painted prominently on the building.

MACON AND MAM

1939: Britain

Two interesting “new” meat products were introduced to the British public on this day. The *Times* reported on the event the following day. Macon is mutton bacon, and mam is mutton ham.

A Macon and Mam Menu Advantages Claimed For Sheep Rashers

Macon was introduced at a brunch party at the Savoy Hotel yesterday. The party was given by the chairman and directors of T.Wall and Sons, who . . . have been experimenting with six different cures, all of which have been successful, but not all to everyone’s taste.

Macon was displayed in the raw, and a buffet showed its possibilities in “Kickshaws” and breakfast dishes. In the raw, it resembles streaky bacon, but with darker fat, and It was stated by an expert that owing to the breadth of the shoulder from which the rashers are cut it is likely to be sold rolled like Canadian bacon. The price will be somewhat less than bacon.

Mr. Mcquisten said macon was a very fine food and ought to be on every breakfast table. He first tasted it 30 years ago at a shooting lunch in the Highlands.

Mutton was a home produced food which at grass, while pig’s food had to be imported. Everybody could do some home curing if they secured a fat sheep.

Miss M. Baron Russell gave some practical advice on the cooking of macon. Rashers should be cooked in the same way as bacon under a gas or electric grill, but they must be extremely well done. Those who liked their

bacon pink should let their macon brown. She also gave a recipe for cooking mutton ham, or “mam.”

This was not a new concept, the demonstration was to announce a new commercial product to the general public, not a new idea. The history of preparing one type of meat to simulate another (or even fish to seem like meat or vice versa) is ancient. In *The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy* (1784) by Hannah Glasse, the author gives recipes to make veal ham, beef ham, and mutton ham.

To make Mutton Hams

You must take a hind-quarter of mutton, cut it like a ham, take an ounce of salt-petre, a pound of coarse sugar, a pound of common salt i mix them, and rub your ham, lay it in a hollow tray with the skin downwards, baste it every day for a fortnight, then roll it in saw-dust, and hang it in the woodsmoke, a fortnight; then boil it, and hang it in a dry place, and cut it out in rashers, and broil it as you want.

The art of “mock food” was highly developed from medieval times. Sometimes this form of imitation was purely for fun, sometimes it was to impress guests with the skill of the cook (and therefore the wealth and power of the employer, and sometimes to compensate for a missing ingredient, or a dietary regulation. An interesting couple of questions about counterfeit food is: “How often was the subterfuge meant to deliberately cheat the diner, and how often was it revealed?”

The following recipe also comes from Glasse’s book, and is a fine example of the extent of the practice of preparing “mock” food.

To Souse a Turkey, in imitation of Sturgeon

You must take a fine large turkey, dress it very clean, dry and bone it, then tie it up as you do sturgeon, put into the pot you boil it in one quart of white wine, one quart of water, one quart of good vinegar, a very large handful of salt; let it boil, skim it well, and then put in the turkey. When it is enough, take it out and tie it tighter. Let the liquor boil a little longer; and if you think the pickle wants more vinegar or salt, add it when it is cold, and pour it upon the turkey. It will keep some months, covering it close from the air, and keeping it in a dry cool place. Eat it with oil, vinegar, and sugar, just as you like it. Some admire it more than sturgeon; it looks pretty covered with

rennet for a side-dish.

TURNIP BREAD

1693: Britain

Probably as long as humans have been making bread, there have been times and circumstances when it has been necessary to eke out valuable grain with other ingredients. At times of poor wheat crops, it became a subject of great interest to all, but bread for the poor—made from coarser grain anyway—generally contained peas or beans, or other starchy vegetables as a matter of course. Once they became established in Europe, potatoes were a common substitute for flour, but it was well into the eighteenth century before it was sufficiently well accepted for this. Turnips were another obvious choice. They were grown for a long time as animal fodder before horticultural advances and improvements made them acceptable as a table vegetable. Turnips were however used to bulk up bread in times of dearth of grain from at least the sixteenth century. By the seventeenth century it was a commonly recommended practice.

In the records of the Royal Society: An abstract of a Letter, from M. Samuel Dale to Mr. John Houghton, S.R.S concerning the making of Turnip-Bread in Essex. Dated Braintree, Dec. 6. 1693

Take peeled turnips, and boil them in water until they are soft or tender; then strongly pressing out the juice, mix them being beaten or pounded very fine or small, with their weight of wheat-meal. Then adding salt and ye[a]st, pf each q.s and warm water, knead it up as other dough or paste; and having suffered it a little while to ferment, let it be baked as common bread.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1811: USA

From the journal of Wilson Price Hunt's overland expedition in 1811–1812:

We were just setting out on the 6th when to my astonishment and distress I saw Mr. Crooks and his people on the other side of the river. I returned to camp at once and built a canoe with the hide of the horse I had killed the night before. Then I launched some food in it, sending it across the river to

our starving companions. Mr. Crooks and one of his men came across to us. Poor man! He was almost completely exhausted by fatigue and hunger. He told me that he had already traveled for three days downstream, that the mountains there were even higher and narrowed to not more than sixty to a hundred feet between sheer walls. It was impossible for men in their condition to get through. For six days they had had only the meat of their dogs for food. Mr. McKenzie and Mr. Reed had passed and Mr. Crooks had talked with them only a few days earlier. They told him that Mr. McClellan had left the river and crossed the mountains, hoping to find the Flathead Indians. In the place where we met, the river flowed almost exactly east. Mr. Crooks said that it continued to run in that direction.

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

We found a new *Eugenia*, a tree of rather stunted growth, with broad opposite leaves, and fruit of the size of an apple, of a delicate rose-colour, and when ripe, a most delicious refreshment during a hot day. We had frequently met with this tree on sandstone ridges, and in sandy soils, but had never before found it in fruit. The day was distressingly hot, but we had several light showers during the afternoon.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1704: America

From the Journal of Sarah Knight:

Dec. 6th we set out from New Haven, and about 1 t same morning came to Stratford ferry; wch crossing, about two miles on the other side Baited our horses and would have eat a morsell ourselves, But the Pumpkin and Indian mixt Bred had such an Aspect, and the Bare-legg'd Punch so awkerd or rather Awfull a sound, that we left both, and proceeded forward, and about seven at night come to Fairfield, where we met with good entertainment and Lodg'd; about 12 at noon we arrived, and Had a Dinner of Fryed Venison, very savoury. Landlady wanting some pepper in the seasoning, bid the Girl hand her the spice in the little Coy cunn on ye shelve. From

did the Girl hand her the spice in the blue Gay Cupp on ye shene. From hence we Hasted towards Rye, walking and Leading our Horses neer a mile together, up a prodigious high Hill; and so Riding till about nine at night, and there arrived and took up our Lodgings at an ordinary, wch a French family kept. Here being very hungry, I desired a fricasee, wch the Frenchman undertakeing, mannaged so contrary to my notion of Cookery, that I hastned to Bed superless.

1737: At Sea

John Wesley, having decided to return to England, was aboard the *Samuel*, and wrote in his journal: "I began instructing a Negro lad in the principles of Christianity. The next day I resolved to break off living delicately and return to my old simplicity of diet; and after I did so, neither my stomach nor my head much complained of the motion of the ship."

1763: France

From the Journal of Tobias Smollett's *Travels through France and Italy*. In a letter from Nice:

At Brignolles, where we dined, I was obliged to quarrel with the landlady, and threaten to leave her house, before she would indulge us with any sort of flesh-meat. It was meagre day, and she had made her provision accordingly. She even hinted some dissatisfaction at having heretics in her house: but, as I was not disposed to eat stinking fish, with ragouts of eggs and onions, I insisted upon a leg of mutton, and a brace of fine partridges, which I found in the larder.

1791: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde:

This being my Tithe Audit Day the following people waited on me, paid me their respected dues and dined and spent the remaining part of the day with me. . . . I gave them for Dinner a Surloin of Beef roasted, Sliff-Marrow-Bone of Beef boiled, a boiled Leg of Mutton and Caper-Sauce, a Couple of Rabbits and Onion Sauce, Some salt Fish boiled and parsnips, and Egg Sauce with plenty of plumb-Puddings and plain ditto. They spoke highly in

favour of my strong Beer, they never drank any better they said.

1819: USA

John Pintard, in New York, wrote regularly to his daughter in New Orleans. In the letter of this day he comments on her young sisters merits as a housekeeper.

[H]as been particularly successful in preparing her confectionary. . . . She likewise has made, agreeably to our family receipts, Cherry and Raspberry Brandy Noyau & Persico, all to my taste exquisitely fine & superior to any imported, and this entirely herself, as she insisted on preparing and compounding & infusing all the ingredients with her own hands. . . . She is equally successful with her pastry. . . . She carves a Turkey, Goose, or duck with the dexterity of a Surgeion.

DECEMBER 7

A LITERARY LUNCHEON

1932: Paris

The annual lunch meeting of the literary association, the *Académie Goncourt* met at its traditional venue, the restaurant Drouant on this day, as it had done since 1914, to vote on the best novel of the year. The choice in 1932 became a controversial one.

On this occasion, one of the jurors was the novelist Lucien Descaves, and he described the events on this particular occasion:

The Académie was assembled at noon on December 7th 1932. The lunch looked promising: Marennes oysters, grilled lobster, goose stuffed with chestnuts, crêpes bordelaises and a blanc de blancs. I was just about to do honour to this feast when I was astonished to learn that they were going to hold the election immediately, and not after the meal, which is the usual manner.

I didn't see any objection to this. The vote was taken immediately and Rosny the elder counted the vote out loud. The first names that came to my

ears made me sit up. After the sixth, no illusion was possible: Céline [author of *Voyage au bout de la nuit*] was beaten. . . . The majority went to Guy Mazeline's book: *Les Loups*.

I didn't say a word. I placed my already opened napkin on the tablecloth, and, crossing the room, I reached the door after shaking Ajabert's hand:

—"Are you going?" he asked me.

—"As you can see."

And I left, without showing the slightest sign of regret to the menu.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1999: USA

Thomas Ryan was granted Patent No. 5,996,568 for a "Process for Propelling Foodstuffs or the Like into a Crowd." There does not seem to be any evidence that this invention was a runaway success, but it is testament to the idea that there is no end to human ingenuity. The process was described as:

[S]teps of (a) wrapping a product-in a wrapper that is designed not to come apart when flying through the air, that is relatively soft and without any hard or sharp edges, and that is flexible, compressible and relatively airtight; (b) placing the product and its wrapper within a tube in a manner such that the compressible, relatively airtight package forms a seal with an inner wall of the tube; and (c) ejecting the product and its wrapper out of the tube and toward an audience by applying a pressurized gas within the tube, whereby the flexible, compressible and relatively airtight wrapper both helps seal the wrapper to the tube in order to make the ejection process efficient, and acts to keep the package together as it travels toward the audience.

AGRICULTURE

1796: USA

In his final State-of-the-union message of December 7, 1796, George

Washington—ever the champion of agricultural pursuits urged Congress to create a board of agriculture to be “charged with collecting and diffusing information, and . . . to encourage and assist a spirit of discovery and improvement.”

It was to be almost a hundred years before Washington’s suggestion was realized, with the formation of the United States Department of Agriculture in 1862.

THE STRAWBERRY

18 24: London, England

A meeting of the Royal Horticultural Society of London on this day heard a report entitled *An Account and Description of the Different Varieties of Strawberries which have been cultivated and examined in the garden of the Horticultural Society of London* given by James Barnet. He described a study of 400 plants collected by the society which he had determined came from 6 classes, with a total of over 50 varieties represented. The collection had begun in 1822 at the establishment of the society’s gardens at Cheswick.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1768: Argentina

From the *Endeavour* Journal of Joseph Banks:

“*Rio de Janeiro*” This morn weighd and stood out to sea. . . . The town of Rio de Janiero. . . . I shall now speak of the countrey which I know rather more of than of the other as I was ashore one whole day: in that time I saw much Cleard ground but cheifly of an indifferent quality, tho doubtless there is such as is very good as the sugar and tobacco which is sent to Europe from hence plainly testifies; but all that I saw was employd in Breeding cattle of which they have great plenty, tho their pastures are the worst I ever saw on account of the shortness of the grass, and consequently the beef sold in the market tho it is tolerably cheap is so lean that an Englishman can hardly Eat it. I likewise saw great plantations of *Iatropha manikot*, which is calld in the West Indies Cassada and here Farina de Pao,

i.e. wooden meal, a very proper name, for the cakes they make with it taste as if they were made of Sawdust and yet it is the only bread which is Eat here—for European bread is sold at nearly the rate of a shilling a pound, and is also exceeding bad on account of the flour which is generally heated in its passage from Europe.

The Countrey produces many more articles but as I did not see them or hear them mentiond I shall not set them down, tho doubtless it is capable of bringing any thing that our West India Islands do, notwithstanding this they have neither Coffee or chocolate but import both from Lisbon.

Their fruits however I must not pass over in Silence, they have several I shall particularly mention those that were in season while we were there, which were Pine apples, Melons, water melons, oranges, Limes, Lemons, sweet Lemons, citrons, Plantanes, Bananes, Mangos, Mamme apples, acajou apples and nutts, Jamboira, another sort which bears a small black fruit, Coco nutts, Palm nuts of two kinds, Palm berries. Of these I must seperately give my opinion, as no doubt it will seem strange to some that I should assert that I have eat many of them and especialy pine apples better in England than any I have met with here. Begin then with the pines as the Fruit from which I expected the most, they being I beleive natives of this countrey, tho I cannot say I have seen or even heard of their being at this time wild any where in this neighbourhood: they are cultivated much as we do cabbages in Europe or rather with less care, the plants being set between bedds of any kind of garden stuff and sufferd to take their chance, the price of them in the Market is seldom above and generally under a vintain which is 3 halfpence. All that Dr Solander and myself tasted we agreed were much inferior to those we had eat in England; tho in general they were more Juicy and sweet yet they had no flavour but were like sugar melted in water. Their Melins are still worse from the Specimen we had, for we got but one, which was perfectly mealy and insipid; their water melons however are very good for they have some little flavour or at least a degree of acid which ours have not. Oranges are large and very juicy, we thought them good, doubtless better than any we had tasted at home, but probably Italy and Portugal produce as good had we been there in the time of their being in perfection. Lemons and limes are like ours, Sweet Lemons are sweetish and without flavour, Citrons have a sickly faint taste otherwise are like them.

Mangos were not in perfection but promis'd to be a very fine fruit, they are

mangos were not in perfection but promis'd to be a very fine fruit, they are about the size of a peach, full of a melting yellow pulp not unlike that of a summer peach which has a very gratefull flavour, but in all we had it was spoild by a taste of turpentine which I am told is not found in the ripe ones. Bananas are in shape and size like a small thick sausage, coverd with a thick yellow rind, which is peeld off and the fruit within is of a consistence which might be expected from a mixture of Butter and flour but a little Slimey, its taste is sweet with a little perfume. Plantanes differ from these in being longer and thinner and having less lusciousness in their taste: both these fruits were disagreeable to most of our people but after some use I became tolerably fond of them. Acajou or casshou is shapd like an apple but larger, he taste very disagreeab[le]e sourish and bitter, the nut grows at the top of them. Mamme apples are bigger than a Codlin in England, Coverd with a deep yellow skin, the pulp on the inside is very insipid or rather disagreeable to the taste, and full of small round seeds coverd with a thick mucilage which continually Cloy your mouth. Jamboira is the same as I saw at Madeira, a fruit calculated more to please the smell than the taste; the other sort are small and black and resemble much the taste of our English bilberries. Coco nutts are so well known in England that I need only say I have tasted as good there as any I met with here. Palm nutts of two sorts, one long and shapd like dates the other round, both these are rosted before their kernels are Eatable and Even then they are not so good a[s] Coco nuts. Palm berries appear much like Black grapes, they are the fruit of Bactris minor, but for Eating have scarce any pulp covering a very large stone and what there is has nothing but a light acid to recommend it. Here are also the fruits of several species of prickle pears which are very insipid. Of European Fruits I saw apples but very mealy and insipid and one peach which was also a very bad one.

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

The old camps of the natives, which we passed in the forest, were strewed with the shells of goose eggs, which showed what an important article these birds formed in the culinary department of the natives; and, whilst their meat and eggs served them for food, their feathers afforded them a protection

1911: Antarctica

Robert Scott and his small party left their winter quarters on November 1 on their attempt to reach the South Pole. Conditions were already extraordinarily difficult.

Camp 30. The storm continues and the situation is now serious. One small feed remains for the ponies after to-day, so that we must either march tomorrow or sacrifice the animals. That is not the worst; with the help of the dogs we could get on, without doubt. The serious part is that we have this morning started our summer rations, that is to say, the food calculated from the Glacier depot has been begun. . . . I can find no sign of an end, and all of us agree that it is utterly impossible to move. Resignation to misfortune is the only attitude, but not an easy one to adopt.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1666: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys: “[A]nd so home to dinner where finding the cloth laid, and much crumpled but clean, I grew angry and flung the trenchers about the room, and in a mighty heat I was; so a clean cloth was laid, and my poor wife very patient.”

1729: England

Letter from John Byrom, inventor of a type of shorthand and writer of hymns, to his wife in Manchester. He has just heard of the death of his little daughter Nelly, and in part of his letter he discourses on the proper food for children.

I am sure that herbs, roots and fruits in season, good house-bread water porridge, milk fresh, &c., are the properest food for them, and for drink, water and milk, and wine, ale, beer, posset, or any liquor that is in its natural or artificial purity, whenever they have the least occasion for it. Puddings and dumplings are a sort of bread, and so may be very good for 'em if the meal or flour be so; but to take bread and crumble it and sugar it and plum it and boil it, is to take much pains to turn wholesome nourishment into unwholeome, as, if that which disguises it from natural taste, the sugar and spices, were away, it would soon appear and be

taste, the sugar and sweets, were away, it would soon appear and be rejected as having lost all its proper nourishing sweetness, as much as green gooseberries, apricots, &c., would be rejected as not having yet got their nourishing sweetness if they were not buried in sugar. One thing comes into my head now I am talking with thee about these things, that when the children have tea they had better drink it while it is good and not the last dregs of it only ; I believe a good dish of bohea [tea] of a good reasonable strength sweetened and creamed to her palate must be as good a thing for Beppy's cough as one can devise any how else. Thou must excuse me for talking thus ramblingly about their food, &c.; since I have lost one of my young folks it makes me more impertinent about the rest. But I need not ask thy excuse nor question thy care I only wish them under that as much as possible.

1786: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde: "Nancy's Pigg was killed this Morning and a nice, fine, fat White Pigg it is. It is to be weighted to Morrow Morning. We are to make some Somersett black Puddings to Morrow, if we can by our Receipt from thence."

1794: USA

George Washington, in a letter to William Pearce:

I think it would be no unsatisfactory experiment to fat one bullock altogether with Potatoes; another, altogether with Indian meal; and third with a mixture of both: keeping an exact account of the time they are fattening, and what is eaten of each, and of hay, by the different steers; that a judgement may be formed of the best and least expensive mode of stall feeding beef for market, or for my own use.

1874: At Sea

Thomas Payne Judkins and his wife were en route from England to New Zealand aboard the sailing ship *Assaye*. They left on September 1, 1874. On December 7 he wrote:

We have had another bread riot to-day. Since the last disturbance about the

bread, the baker has carried on his roguish tricks on a larger scale. To some he sells the dough, instead of the bread. But he has not been caught fair till to-day. In this case he made an accomplice of the boatswain, who brought down a loaf of bread to a passenger who lives near to me. Mr. MacBourne, the Constable, made and proved the charge, and reported the same to the Captain and Surgeon-Superintendent, who, at first, decided that we should have flour instead of bread, but after a lot of useless chatter and petitions, this decision was subverted, and the old method reinstated.

DECEMBER 8

BREAKFAST ABOARD

1909: At Sea

Passengers aboard the S.S. *Santo Maru* of the Nippon Yusen Kaisha Line had a very un-Japanese luncheon menu offered to them on this day.

Vermicelli Soup

Baked Bacon & Beans

Braised Chicken & Champignons

Cold Boiled Corned Beef

Cold Boiled Ox Tongue

Cold Roast Pheasant

Cold Roast Beef

Baked Sweet Potatoes

Boiled Potatoes

Salad Plain

Stewed Prunes and Rice

Fruits Asstd. And Crackers

Dessert

Coffee

FOOD & WAR

1777: American Revolutionary War

From the diary of Albigenice Waldo, surgeon of Washington's at Valley Forge: "All at our Several Posts. Provisions and Whiskey very scarce. Were Soldiers to have plenty of Food and Rum, I believe they would Storm Tophet."

1941: Britain, World War II

The Vitamin Welfare Scheme was launched, to compensate for any possible shortfall in vitamin intake due to the restrictions of rationing and the reduced availability of fresh fruit. Initially dietary supplements of blackcurrant juice and cod-liver oil capsules were supplied to children under the age of two years. A year later the policy was extended to include pregnant women and children up to five years old (who were both already receiving free or cheap milk) and orange juice and Vitamin A and D tablets (in lieu of the cod-liver oil capsules) were added to the available supplements.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1885: USA

James William Black of Berwick, Nova Scotia, Canada was granted Patent No. 332,134 for an improvement in "Ice-Cream Soda." His improvement was a "new confectionery composition or sirup for conveniently and economically making, as desired, a refreshing beverage called "ice-cream soda." His composition contained whipped egg whites, sugar, lime juice, lemons, citric acid, flavoring, and bicarbonate of soda.

1896: USA

African American inventor John T. White, of New York, New York, was granted Patent No. 572,849 for a new improved “Lemon-Squeezer.” The simple hinged press mechanism made squeezing lemons and straining the juice very easy, and kept the hands clean.

FOOD & BOOKS

1825: France

La Physiologie du Gout (The Physiology of Taste: or, Meditations on Transcendental Gastronomy) by Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin (1755–1826) was published on this day. The book has never been out of print, and is often said to be the most famous book ever written about food. It is perhaps best known for its aphorisms, many of which have entered our general vocabulary.

- Tell me what you eat and I will tell you what you are.
- The discovery of a new dish confers more happiness on humanity than the discovery of a new star.
- To invite people to dine with us is to make ourselves responsible for their well-being for as long as they are under our roofs.
- Cooking is one of the oldest arts and one that has rendered us the most important service in civic life.
- The pleasure of the table belongs to all ages, to all conditions, to all countries, and to all areas; it mingles with all other pleasures, and remains at last to console us for their departure.

Gourmandism is an impassioned, considered, and habitual preference for whatever pleases the taste. It is the enemy of overindulgence; any man who eats too much or grows drunk risks being expelled from the army of disciples.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1844: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt’s journal of his overland expedition in northern and

central Australia: “We enjoy no meal so much as our tea and damper at luncheon, when we encamp between twelve and two o’clock. It is remarkable how readily the tea dispels every feeling of fatigue, without the slightest subsequent injury of health.”

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1660: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

I went to dinner with my wife and Mr. and Mrs. Pierce the Chyrurgeon to Mr. Pierce the Purser (the first time that ever I was at his house), who doth live very plentifully and finely. We have a lovely Chine of beef and other good things, very complete—and drank a great deal of wine.

1847: Italy

Elizabeth Barrett Browning was in Italy, and wrote to a friend:

So, here we are in the Pitti till April, in small rooms yellow with sunshine from morning till evening . . . and Miss Boyle, ever and anon, comes at night, at nine o’clock, to catch us at hot chestnuts and mulled wine, and warm her feet at our fire. . . . I cant make Robert go out a single evening.

1952: Australia

The Australian writer Patrick White wrote to his friend Ben Huebsch in New York on this day: “*Dogwoods*. My next move will be bees, I think. One can’t sit eating one’s own olives and goat’s cheese without adding one’s own honey.”

DECEMBER 9

PEACE PUDDING & PATRIOTIC MINCEMEAT

1918: Britain, World War I

The *Daily News* of this day gave recipes for Official Christmas Pudding and Patriotic Mincemeat:

Peace Christmas Pudding cannot aspire to pre-war richness though the increased sugar ration will help to make it palatable, for in most cases, dried eggs will have to be used, and only a limited quantity of dried fruit will be available for each family. This dried fruit deficiency can, however, be made good by the addition of apples, of which there will shortly be a large quantity on the market.

Last year many Christmas puddings were made on a recommended recipe issued by the Ministry of Food. This, which includes carrots as well as apples, is likely to be so useful to housewives that in response to letters we reprint it. The quantities given make a pudding large enough for a family of six.

Official Christmas Pudding

Ingredients:—4oz. flour, 4oz. soaked bread; 6oz. chopped suet; ½ teaspoonful salt; 1 dessertspoonful mixed spice; 4oz. sultanas; 2oz. mixed chopped peel; ½ lb apples; 2oz. grated carrot; 1 egg (dried); ½ gill milk; 2oz. treacle; grated rind and juice of half a lemon

Method:—Weigh out and measure all the ingredients. Prepare the dry materials and put them in a mixing bowl, stir all well together, then add the egg and milk. When thoroughly mixed, put the mixture into two well-greased basins, cover each with a cloth and boil or steam for fully three hours.

Mincemeat for Patriotic People

“Mincemeat for Patriotic People” was another official recipe that will again be welcome to housewives preparing for Peace Christmas.

Take 1 ¼ lb. apples, 6 oz. grated suet, ¼ lb. currants and raisins, ¼ lb. moist sugar or corn syrup, ¼ lb. figs, stoned dates, or prunes, ¼ lb. candied peel (this is optional), 1 oz. ground ginger, and 1 oz. mixed spice, 1 lemon or

(this is optional) 1 oz ground ginger, and 1 oz, mixed spice, 1 lemon or orange. A gill of cider is an improvement.

Peel and chop the apples, chop the dates, figs, or prunes, and candied peel, clean currants and raisins, mix all together. Sufficient for 36 mince pies.

This year, as dates, figs or prunes are rarely obtainable, a few more currants and raisins can be added instead.

THE DUKE OF CLARENCE'S HOUSEHOLD

1469: England

A long list of regulations for the household of the Duke of Clarence (the brother of King Edward IV) was laid down on this day. The orders regulated every aspect of day-to-day life in the royal household, including meal-times, where meals could be taken, the measures taken to prevent theft of food and goods, the responsibilities of individual office-holders, and the penalties for breaking the orders. Some of the rules laid down were:

The Establishments and Ordinaunces made for the Rule and Guiding of the Householde of the Right Excellent Prince the Duke of Clarence, at the Monasterye of Waltham, the IX Daye of Decembre, in the Eighth Yeare of our Sovereigne Lord Kinge Edward the IVth.

ITEM, It is appoynted and ordeyned, that in the seid Duke's houlholde, a furst dynner in eting dayes shall be at ten of the clock in the somer season, and a furst souper at five of the clocke; and in the wynter season, a furst dynner at nine of the clocke, and a furst souper at four of the clocke; and that at the same dynner and souper, be the kervers, ameners, cup-bearers, and sewers, and all other officers assigned to serve the seid Duke, the chambre, and the halle; to the intent, that the seid Duke be welle and honorablye served'. .The trespassoure fayling thereof to leese a dayes wages, and to leese his dynner and souper-, unlesse that he can alledge cause resonable to the contrarye.

ITEM, That none officer of the seid housholde dyne nor soupe in his office, nor suffer any other persone so to doe, onlesse then it be by commaundment of any of the heede officers, for cause resonable; upon payne of lesinge of twoe dayes wages.

ITEM, It is appointed that the gentyelman-ufshers, and in their absence the yoman usshers of the chambre, the Marshalles, and in their absence the usshers of the halle, dayly at every mete and foupper, make recordes of brede, wyne, and ale, as it is spente; and alsoe of the messes; and that they the same recordes bringe dailye into the countinghouse, uppon payne of lesinge a dayes wages atte everye defaute.

ITEM, It is appoynted that there be in the bakehouse a yeoman, a groome, and a page; and that they bake daily, for the seid Duke and his bourde, payne-mayneys at every second daye, manchete brede and rounde brede for housholde, proportionably to the numbyr of the same; and that they make of every busshell of whete xxx lofes, weyinge to the ovyn xxx ounces, and well baken xxviii ounces of goode paste; and halfe that weight for small breade for lyvereyes; takinge alweye twoe payne-maynes, and twoe manchettes, for a lose; and that they be ready to bake brede for horses and houndes, the branne alweye reserved to the use of the said Duke; alsoe, that the seid brede be wayed in the countinghouse, as ofte as it (hall be nedeful; and if the weights or the paste be not sufficiaunte, then the trespassoures to be punisshed after their desertes.

ITEM, It is appoynted that the porters waite and attend dilygentlye atte the gate; and atte the leste one of them to be there, and see that noe vitails [victuals], silver plate, pewter vessells, ne none other stuffe of the seide houlholde, be enbcselled [embezzled] oute.

The Duke of Clarence was imprisoned in the Tower of London in 1478, on charges of treason against his brother the king, and tradition (but not history) says that he was drowned in a butt of malmsey (see XXX).

AN ABSTEMIOUS DIET

1742: Britain

An interesting case was read before the Royal Society on this day, and subsequently published in 1743.

The case of Mr. John Ferguson, of Argyleshire in Scotland: who hath lived above eighteen years only on water, whey, or barley-water: together with

observations thereon: wherein are laid down the possibility of the truth of the said case, attested to the Royal Society, on Thursday the 9th day of December 1742: supported by cases of the like nature from authors, reasons why such slender diet hath been able so long to support life: with some curative intentions and remedies for this person recovering his pristine state of health.

The story began:

That in the month of *July*, about Eighteen Years past, one *John Ferguson*, Herdman of the Parifh of *Kilmelford* in *Argyleshire* in Scotland, of the Age of Thirty-eight Years, on a warm Day over-heating himself in Chace of Cattle, drank plentifully of cold River Water, whereupon he fell afleep by the River Side, and slept for Twenty-four Hours; waking he found himself in a violent Fever, was carried home, and there desiring Drink, they gave him Water, on drinking whereof he vomited; ever since which Time he hath not been able to contain in his Stomach any thing except Water, Whey, or Barley-water: That in the Summer Season he useth tor his Food only cold Water, and in Winter only warm Whey, or Barley-water: That if in drinking the Barley-water, one Grain of the Barley should accidentally be swallow'd, his Stomach immediately ejects the fame by Vomit: That, in order for the Discovery of any Fallacy that might be used, the faid *Ferguson* hath been by his Father's Master confined m a Room for twenty Days, during which Time he lived only on Water, Whey, or Barley-water, and during that Time had no Stool: That the said *Ferguson* hath a florid fresh Countenance, seems as other Men in other Respects, but is weak, and not so fit for Labour; his Evacuation by Urine seemeth in Proportion to the Quantity he drinks; and he generally in his Business walketh about five Miles every Day.

The presenter of the paper went on to discuss the medical aspects of the case, and other similar examples from the ancient literature. He opined: "That nothing will do us more Injury, or sooner procure a sudden Death, than the drinking plentifully of cold Water when the Blood is much exalted and attenuated by Exericse, few (I believe) will deny."

FOOD & TELEVISION

1936: Britain

The first cookery demonstration on British television took place at 3.03pm on this day. Moira Meighn, the author of *The Magic Ring for the Needy and Greedy*—a guide to cooking with a Primus stove—demonstrated the preparation of meals that could be cooked in fifteen minutes on a single cooking ring.

APPOINTING A POTTAGER

1674: England

In 1674, Charles II signed a warrant to appoint “a Pottagier or a french Cooke for the making of Pottages for Our Dyet.” This was an additional provision to the normal number working in the king’s privy kitchen. A man referred to as *John Tattau alias La Brie* was appointed Second Yeoman of the Kitchen on December 9, 1674.

The pottager at this time was responsible for many of the grand dishes such as *bisques, olios, terrines*, etc., not merely soups.

Charles II had spent many years in exile in Europe during the Civil War and the Commonwealth of England, where he developed a taste for Continental food. He brought these new tastes back to England when he was restored to the throne in 1660, and French food became fashionable as a result of his influence.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1811: USA

From the journal of Wilson Price Hunt’s overland expedition in 1811–1812: “I therefore left three men with Mr. Crooks and set out on the 9th with two others to rejoin my group. I had three beaver skins and I left two; my men and I made a supper of the third. The weather was extremely cold.”

DECEMBER 10

AN ALL-AUSTRALIAN MEAL

19 25: Australia

Melbourne *Punch* magazine on this day suggested a menu for an “All Australian Meal,” the criterion being that all the ingredients had to be produced in the country. An attempt had been made to include every state, although Western Australia and the Northern Territory failed to get a mention. The ingredients may have been from Australia, but the style of the food was still firmly European. Some of the choices were well out of the mainstream for the time, such as the *Bêche de Mer* (or *trepang*) which, although prolific in Australian, was almost exclusively fished there by Asian fishermen.

Salted Almonds, Olives

-

Oysters on the shell

-

Bêche de Mer soup

-

Fresh water blackfish, Maitre d’hotel

-

File of beef, Pique, Sauce Bernaise

-

Roast teal, Port Wine Sauce Orange Salad

-

Ice Pudding

-

Devilled Prawns

-

Dinner at 8.00

Dessert Coffee

-

Sauterne or Chablis Burgundy

-

Champagne Cognac

1913: Albany, New York

An Anniversary Banquet for the Second Field Hospital A.G. N.Y. was held at Keeler's Hotel on this night. The menu was a novelty in itself. It was printed on an armband of bandage material, with a large red cross in the center. The dishes served were:

Bronx Cocktail

Oyster Cocktail

Celery Olives

Salted Almonds

Oyster Cocktail

Mock Turtle Soup

Broiled Blue Fish

Julienne Potatoes

Chicken Patties, a l'Reine

ROMAN PUNCH

Individual Tenderloins'

Mushroom Sauce

French Peas

Parisienne Potatoes

Asparagus Tip Salad

Neapolitan Ice Cream

Assorted Cakes

Roquefort Cheese

Toasted Crackers

Beer

Coffee

Spring Water

Cigars

Cigarettes

FOOD & WAR

19 42: Amsterdam, World War II

From the diary of Anne Frank:

Mr. Van Daan used to be in the meat, sausage, and spice business. . . . We had ordered a lot of meat (under the counter of course) in case we should come upon hard times. It was fun to watch, first the way the pieces of meat went through the mincer, two or three times, then how all the accompanying ingredients were minced with the minced meat, and then how the intestine was filled by means of a spout, to make the sausages. We fried the sausage meat and ate it with sauerkraut for supper that evening, but the Gelderland sausages had to be thoroughly dried first, so we hung them over a stick tied to the ceiling with string. Everyone who came into the room began to laugh when they caught a glimpse of the row of sausages on show. They looked frightfully funny!

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1811: USA

From the diary of Wilson Price Hunt:

Early on the 10th I overtook my people. We had only one horse left and that belonged to Dorion, one of our Canadians. We suggested slaughtering it, but Dorion would not consent to the idea. We finally agreed that it would be better to let the animal live until we knew whether or not the Indian village was still in the same place. I approved this plan quite willingly because the poor horse was only skin and bones. We had not gone far on the trail before we found some tepees of the Shoshones who had come down from the mountains after our departure. I approached them cautiously so as to keep them from hiding their horses. They had twenty and sold us five, one of which I had slaughtered at once, and I sent a man to Mr. Crooks with some of the meat. Several of my men had not eaten since the 7th, the day on which they had left me.

1885: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

They [the local aboriginals] examined every thing, but made not the slightest attempt to rob us even of a trifle. When the women returned at night, they did not bring "Allamurr," or, as it was here called, "Murnatt," but plenty of "Imberbi," the root of *Convolvulus*, which grow abundantly in the plain: they gave us a very seasonable supply of it, but would not taste our dried beef, which they turned, broke, smelled, and then with a feeling of pity and disgust returned to us. Nyuall [the head man of the tribe] gave an amusing account of our state: "You no bread, no flour, no rice, no backi—you no good! Balanda plenty bread, plenty flour, plenty rice, plenty backi! Balanda very good!"

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1662: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

Then to the Dolphin, where Sir J. Minnes, Sir W. Batten, and I, did treat the Auditors of the Exchequer, Auditors Wood and Beale, and hither come Sir G. Carteret to us. We had a good dinner, cost us L5 and 6s., whereof my share 26s., and after dinner did discourse of our salarys and other matters, which I think now they will allow. Thence home, and there I found our new cook-mayde Susan come, who is recommended to us by my wife's brother, for which I like her never the better, but being a good well-looking lass, I am willing to try.

1791: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde:

This being my Tithes Audit Day the following people waited on me, paid me their respected dues and dined and spent the remaining part of the day with me. . . . I gave them for Dinner a Surloin of Beef roasted, Sliff-Marrow-Bone of Beef boiled, a boiled Leg of Mutton and Caper-Sauce, a Couple of Rabbits and Onion Sauce, Some salt Fish boiled and parsnips, and Egg Sauce with plenty of plumb-Puddings and plain ditto. They spoke highly in favour of my strong Beer, they never drank any better they said.

1858: USA

Daniel Ricketson, a friend of Henry Thoreau, wrote in his diary on this day:

My friend Thoreau has a very pleasant acidulous drink, requiring only the addition of sugar. The sap of the birch, white, black and yellow. The former the most aromatic. It is drawn in March as soon as the sap begins to flow. Thoreau uses for spouts the upland sumach, makes the holes in the trees with augurs, filling the spout previously.

Birch wine was very popular in both Britain and America both as a general beverage and for its perceived medicinal value. The *Encyclopaedia Perthensis*, published in 1806, says "Formerly it was in great repute in all nephritic disorders, but it is left out of modern practice."

Here are some instructions for making extracting the sap and making the wine from *The spirit, wine dealer's and publican's director* (London, 1824) by Edward Palmer.

Birch Wine

The juice of the birch tree is extracted by making an incision or hole about four inches up the trunk of the tree, and about five inches deep, in which orifice is placed a faucet having small holes at the end to admit the juice into the cavity of the faucet, thence for it to pass through as pure as possible. In the county of Sussex these trees are plentiful, and many of them yield much juice, whereby a small cask might be filled with it in a few days. But when you are obliged to get it at different times, take care to bottle it whenever you collect any, and cork it well to protect it from the air, as it can never be in greater perfection than when it first comes from the tree; therefore it will not long bear atmospheric exposure without losing its virtue. About the ingress of the spring quarter is the season for extracting the juice from these trees, or when the appearance of the bud is full, and the leaf not much expanded.

The following receipt claims its merit from the experimental skill of a Lady in the county of Sussex, at whose table I partook of this *nouvelle* beverage, birch wine. . . .

Directions for making Birch Wine

With every gallon of the extracted juice boil two pounds of honey as long as you are able to take off superficial scum, put the liquor into a vessel when nearly cold, and work it in the manner which is practiced to tun beer; let it stand until you perceive the head siking, when that takes place rack it into a clean cask, and add three fourths of an ounce of cinnamon, half an ounce of ginger, three ounces of lemon peel pounded, and two quarts of brandy to the proportion of ten gallons of the liquor; in a week or ten days bung it down, and in nine months thereafter it will be fit to bottle, and to each bottle add one wine glass full of the best brandy to vivify it, then it will keep any length of time, stand the test of any climate, greatly improve by extended age, and become a most delicious wine.

DECEMBER 11

SCALING DAY

1602: Geneva. “La Escalade”

On the night of December 11–12, 1602, two thousand men under the command of the French Duke Charles-Emmanuel of Savoy made a surprise attack on the city of Geneva, which the Duke wanted to make his own. The first cohort was to scale the city walls under the cover of darkness, and open the gates to let the massed troops in, but the plan was foiled when the night guard raised the alarm and the church bells were rung. A city legend says that the good woman Mère Catherine Royaume, who lived with her family above one of the city gates, heard the commotion, looked out, and promptly threw a hot pot of soup (and perhaps the pot itself) over the wall, killing one soldier. The ensuing clamor and confusion amongst the Savoyard troops helped the townsfolk to repel the attack.

The event is celebrated annually in the city. The townspeople generally have a good time on this day with a giant bonfire outside the cathedral, parades, dressing up, while singing patriotic songs and enjoying the fact that they did not become French citizens. As for food, the usual winter fare such as mulled wine and hot chestnuts is enjoyed, and also of course, vegetable soup, but the real treat is in the form of chocolate (it is Switzerland, after all). Small chocolates made in the form of *marmites* (soup pots) filled with marzipan vegetables are made, and ritually smashed before being eaten.

RUNCIBLE SPOON

1924

The coining of the phrase “runcible spoon” is attributed to Edward Lear, in 1871, in his poem *The Owl and the Pussycat*, who “dined on mince, and slices of quince, / Which they ate with a runcible spoon.” The exact nature of a runcible spoon has been the subject of considerable debate ever since his poem was published.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* cites a definition appearing in *Notes & Queries* on December 11, 1926, as “[a] runcible spoon is a kind of fork with three broad prongs or tines, one having a sharp edge, curved like a spoon, used with pickles, *etc.* Its origin is in jocular allusion to the slaughter at the Battle of Roncevaux, because it has a cutting edge.”

The theory proposed by the *OED* itself, is that the word is “a fanciful alteration of Rouncival,” a rouncival being a variety of pea, known since at least the sixteenth century, which presumably originated in Roncesvalles (Roncevaux) in the Pyrenees. This theory but it does not explain Lear’s runcible hat, cat, and goose.

It seems that, in a spectacular example of folk etymology at work, that the spoon came after the word.

DISCOVERIES & EXPLANATIONS

1877: USA

John H. Heinz [brother of H. J.], was granted Patent No. 197, 934 for an “Improvement in Pickle-Assorters.” His apparatus sorted pickles (cucumbers) for size, thus facilitating the packing process.

THE FIRST THANKSGIVING

1621: America

The first American thanksgiving was described in a letter dated this day, from Edward Winslow to George Morton. The date of the actual event is not mentioned, but he describes the settlement’s first harvest, a little over a year after their arrival at Cape Cod, and the celebrations which followed.

Plymouth in New England this 11th of December, 1621.

Our harvest being gotten in, our governor sent four men on fowling, that so we might after have a special manner rejoice together after we had gathered the fruit of our labors; they four in one day killed as much fowl, as with a little help beside, served the company almost a week, at which time amongst other recreations, we exercised our arms, many of the Indians coming amongst us, and among the rest their greatest King Massasoit, with some ninety men, whom for three days we entertained and feasted, and they went out and killed five deer, which they brought to the plantation and bestowed on our governor, and upon the captain, and others. And although it be not always so plentiful as it was at this time with us, yet by the goodness of God we are so far from want that we often wish you partakers

goodness of God, we are so far from want that we often wish you partakers of our plenty.

We have found the Indians very faithful in their covenant of peace with us; very loving and ready to pleasure us; . . . there is now great peace amongst the Indians themselves, which was not formerly. . . . We entertain them familiarly in our houses, and they as friendly bestowing their venison on us. . . . For fish and fowl, we have great abundance; fresh cod in the summer is but coarse meat with us; our bay is full of lobsters all the summer and affordeth variety of other fish; in September we can take a hogshead of eels in a night, with small labor, and can dig them out of their beds all the winter; we have mussels and othus at our doors: oysters we have none near, but we can have them brought by the Indians when we will; all the spring-time the earth sendeth forth naturally very good sallet herbs: here are grapes, white and red, and very sweet and strong also. Strawberries, gooseberries, raspas, *etc.* Plums of three sorts, with black and red, being almost as good as a damson.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

We travelled about seven miles N.N.W. over an immense plain, with forest land and rising ground to the eastward, in which direction four prominent hills were seen, one of which had the abrupt peak form of Biroa in Moreton Bay. The plain appeared to be unbounded to the westward. When we approached the forest, several tracts of buffaloes were seen; and, upon the natives conducting us along a small creek which came into the plain from the N.N.E., we found a well beaten path and several places where these animals were accustomed to camp. We encamped at a good-sized water-hole in the bed of this creek, the water of which was covered with a green scum. As the dung and tracks of the buffaloes were fresh, Charley went to track them, whilst Brown tried to shoot some Ibises, which had been at the water and were now perched on a tree about 300 yards off. At the discharge of the gun a buffalo started out of a thicket, but did not seem inclined to go far; Brown returned, loaded his gun with ball, went after the buffalo and wounded him in the shoulder. When Charley came back to the camp, he

wounded him in the shoulder. When Charley came back to the camp, he, Brown and Mr. Roper pursued the buffalo on horseback, and after a long run, and some charges, succeeded in killing it. It was a young bull, about three years old, and in most excellent condition. This was a great, a most fortunate event for us; for our meat bags were almost empty, and, as we did not wish to kill Redmond, our good companion, we had the prospect of some days of starvation before us. We could now share freely with our black friends, and they had not the slightest objection to eat the fresh meat, after baking it in their usual manner. They called the buffalo "Anaborro" and stated that the country before us was full of them. These buffaloes are the offspring of the stock which had either strayed from the settlement at Raffles Bay, or had been left behind when that establishment was broken up. They were originally introduced from the Malay islands. I was struck with the remarkable thickness of their skin, (almost an inch) and with the solidity of their bones, which contained little marrow; but that little was extremely savoury.

1873: Australia

Major Peter Warburton was on his private expedition to be the first to cross Australia from east to west. The party was in a terrible state, but had finally reached the Oakover River and had plentiful water.

We shot some cockatoos, and had some camel's foot for a meal. This latter is a delicacy, but troublesome to cook. I shall, no doubt, appear to dwell too much upon eating; but it is difficult for starving men to keep their minds from thinking of what they once had, and now so urgently need. The heat is increasing daily.

FOOD & WAR

1777: America

From the diary of Albigeance Waldo, surgeon of Washington's at Valley Forge:

At four o'clock the Whole Army were Order'd to March to Swedes Ford on the River Schuylkill, about 9 miles N.W. of Chestnut Hill, and 6 from White Marsh our present Encampment. At sun an hour high the whole were mov'd from the Lines and on their march with baggage. This Night

encamped in a Semi circle nigh the Ford. The enemy had march'd up the West side of Schuylkill—Potter's Brigade if Pennsylvania Militia were already there, and had several skirmishes with them with some loss on this side and considerable on the Enemies. . . .

I am prodigious Sick and cannot get anything comfortable—what in the name of Providence am I to do with a fit of Sickness in this place where nothing appears pleasing to the Sicken'd Eye and nausiating Stomach. But I doubt not Providence will find out a way for my relief. But I cannot eat Beef if I starve, for my stomach positively refuses to entertain such Company, and how can I help that?

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1663: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys. He learned about frozen fish in Prussia on this day:

Then I to the Coffeehouse. . . . Then I went and sat by Mr. Harrington, and some East country merchants, and talking of the country about Quinsborough [Königsberg, Prussia], and thereabouts, he told us himself that for fish, none there, the poorest body, will buy a dead fish, but must be alive, unless it be in winter; and then they told us the manner of putting their nets into the water. Through holes made in the thick ice, they will spread a net of half a mile long; and he hath known a hundred and thirty and a hundred and seventy barrels of fish taken at one draught. And then the people come with sledges upon the ice, with snow at the bottome, and lay the fish in and cover them with snow, and so carry them to market. And he hath seen when the said fish have been frozen in the sledge, so as that he hath taken a fish and broke apieces, so hard it hath been; and yet the same fishes taken out of the snow, and brought into a hot room, will be alive and leap up and down. Swallows are often brought up in their nets out of the mudd from under water, hanging together to some twigg or other, dead in ropes, and brought to the fire will come to life. Fowl killed in December. (Alderman Barker said) he did buy, and putting into the box under his sledge, did forget to take them out to eate till Aprill next, and they then were found there, and were through the frost as sweet and fresh and eat as well as at first killed. Young beares are there; their flesh sold in market as

ordinarily as beef here, and is excellent sweet meat.

1786: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde: “Sent Mr. Custance this Morning a large Baskett of my Potatoes, fresh dug, as she praised them so much.”

1787: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde. He ha guests for dinner on this day.

We had for Dinner to day a boiled Leg of Mutton with Capers, a Couple of Chicken roasted and a Tongue, a Norfolk plain batter Pudding, Tripe, Tarts and some blamange with 4 sorts of Cheese. For Supper some Oysters, a wild Duck roasted, Potatoes roasted, and some cold Chicken &c.

DECEMBER 12

THE RED DINNER

18 95: London, England

The famous “Red Dinner” was held at the Savoy hotel on this night. Wolf Joel of the diamond mining company Barnato Brothers, and Australian Gardiner, an Australian financier had a stupendous night at a casino in Monte Carlo, with twelve straight wins on the red, netting them \$76,000. They returned to London and commissioned a special dinner at the Savoy to commemorate the win. Auguste Escoffier orchestrated the meal with the color red being the theme.

The waiters wore red shirts, red gloves, had red buttons on their coats, and carried red napkins. The room was draped in red, the light shades were red, and red flowers were everywhere. The meus were printed in red, with a roulette table on the back. Naturally the red theme naturally extended to the food.

Hors d’Oeuvres

(open putt pastry sandwiches of smoked salmon, with black caviar)

-

Cliquot Rosé

Consommé au Fumet de Perdrix Rouges

Paillettes Dorées

-

Suprême de Rouget au Chambertin

accompagnés de Laitances de Carpes

aux Ecrevises à la Bordelaise

-

Cailles Mascotte

Riz Pilaf

Château Lafite, Etampe 1870

-

Selle d'Agneau de Galles aux Tomates à la Provençale

Purée de Haricots Rouges

Sauce Souveraine au Suc de Pommes d'Amour

Château Lafitte

-

Pluie d'Or

-

Poularde Truffée aux Perles Noires du Périgord

Salade de Coeurs de Laitue Rouge des Alpes

-

Asperges Nouvelles

Sauce “Coucher de Soleil par un Beau Soir d’Ete”

-

Parfait de Foie Gras

en Gelée au Paprika Doux à la Hongroise

Champagne: Cordon Rouge (Cuvée Spéciale)

-

Rocher de Monte Carlo

-

Assorted Mignardises for the Ladies

-

Café Mode Orientale

Grandes Liqueurs de France

Cigares

Escoffier described the centrepiece *Pluie D’Or* as “A dwarf mandarin tree, its base surrounded with chocolate coins decorated with gold spangles and mixed with tangerines, everything covered with a lace of spun sugar dyed gold.” The Rocher de Monte Carlo was “an ice sculpture of the hill of Monte Carlo, lit up with red lights. At its base, red carnations and red autumn leaves surrounding a crystal ball containing a Mousse de Curaçao covered with red strawberries macerated in sugar and Curaçao.”

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

19 95: London, England

Two people who threatened to release vermin into Harrods' Food Halls during the busy Christmas period unless they were paid a ransom of five million pounds, were arrested on this day. The threats had begun two weeks earlier, and were timed for the busy Christmas season. The men were subsequently charged with blackmail.

“BUY BRITISH”

19 31: Britain

The government began a “Buy British” campaign in an attempt to offset the effects of the depression. The *Illustrated London News* of this day discussed the concept behind the campaign.

Speaking of the economic crisis through which this country is passing leads one naturally to the idea of the slogan of today, “Buy British” . . . It requires but little reflection to realise that the factors of “Buy British”, the food of the nation, and the nation's health, can, and should, go together. There is much to be said for the statement that a country is best suited by its own food; but what cannot adequately be produced in our own home land, and is still desirable, can be supplied by some part of the British Empire. All staple articles of diet—meat, bread, fowl, fish, fruit, vegetables, cereals, eggs, butter and cheese, and the rest—are thus at our command. . . . Why, then, need we for a second entertain the idea of trading with Alien countries for our food material? Fresh food in England is unsurpassed; while the purity of Dominion overseas products cannot be disputed. Scientific methods little dreamt of by the consumer have been increasingly applied to the preparation and preservation of our articles of diet . . . science has now been brought into service to such an extent that we can rest assured that such foods are not only germ free, but that the active principles and vitamins, so necessary to health, remain unimpaired.

CHAMPAGNE

1979: Zimbabwe

Lord Christopher Soames arrived in Zimbabwe-Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) on this day, to function as interim governor during the country's transition to peace and independence. He took with him a quantity of fine champagne. At some point in the negotiations, he was asked about progress, and apparently said "Rhodesia will be at peace in exactly thirty days." When asked how he knew that, he said "I have thirty bottles of Pol Roger left." Peace was signed less than thirty days later.

THE PILLSBURY BAKE-OFF

1949: USA

The first Pillsbury Bake-Off (then known as the Grand National Recipe and Baking Contest) was held in the Grand Ballroom of the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel to celebrate the eightieth birthday of the firm. It has been run regularly since, initially annually, now every second year.

Eleanor Roosevelt wrote in her regular newspaper column after the first event: "This is a healthy contest and a highly American one. It may sell Pillsbury flour but it also reaches far down into the lives of the housewives of America. These are women who ran their homes and cooked at home. They were not professional cooks."

The first prize at the first contest went to Theodora Smafield of Rockford, Illinois, for her No-Knead Water-Rising Twists. Her method involved a unique step—wrapping the dough in a tea towel, and putting it under warm water to rise.

Water-Rising Twists

Combine: ½ cup shortening

3 tablespoons sugar

1 ½ teaspoons salt

1 teaspoon vanilla

½ cup scalded milk*

Add 2 cakes compressed yeast, crumbled (or 2 packages dry granular yeast dissolved in ¼ cup lukewarm water); mix well.

Blend in 1 ½ cups sifted Pillsbury's Best Enriched Flour and beat until smooth. Cover and let rest 15 min.

Add 3 eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition.

Blend in 1 ½ cups sifted Pillsbury's Best Enriched Flour and mix thoroughly. The dough will be quite soft.

Let rise in one of two ways: (1) Either set covered dough in warm place (80° to 90° F.) about ½ hour; (2) or tie dough in a tea towel, allowing ample space for the dough to rise. Then place in large mixing bowl and fill with water (75° to 80° F.) Let stand until dough rises to the top of the water, about 30 to 45 minutes. Remove from water. The dough will be soft and moist.

Combine ¾ cup chopped nuts (any kind)

½ cup sugar

1 teaspoon cinnamon

Divide dough into small pieces with a tablespoon. Roll each piece in sugar-nut mixture; stretch to about 8-inch length. Twist into desired shapes. Place on greased baking sheet. Let stand for 5 minutes.

Bake in moderate oven (375° F.) for 12 to 15 minutes. Makes 2 dozen twists.

*If dry yeast is used, decrease milk to ¼ cup.

FOOD & WAR

1777: American Revolutionary War

From the diary of Albigenge Waldo, surgeon of Washington's at Valley Forge:

A Bridge of Waggons made accross the Schuylkill last Night consisting of 36 waggons, with a bridge of Rails between them each. Some skirmishing over the River. Militia and dragoons brought into Camp several Prisoners. Sun Set—We were order'd to march over the River—It snows—I'm Sick—eat nothing—No Whiskey—No Forage—Lord—Lord—Lord. The Army were 'till Sun Rise crossing the River—some at the Waggon Bridge and some at the Raft Bridge below. Cold and uncomfortable.

1861: USA, American Civil War

There was a dearth of coffee in the South during the American Civil War due to the Union blockade of Confederate seaports. By 1862, coffee supplies were exhausted, but the ingenuity of the locals was not. The newspapers of the war years published many recipes for substitutes made from a wide range of grains, pulses, and roots.

The *Albany Patriot* (Georgia) of this day published a letter about a coffee substitute made from sweet potato.

A Good Substitute for Coffee.—At the present time, when coffee is selling at a dollar a pound the following suggestion from a correspondent of a Southern paper, is worth trying:

Many worthless substitutes for coffee have been named. The acorn need only be tried once to be discarded. Corn meal and grits can be easily detected by the taste. Rye is only tolerable. Oakra [*sic*] seed is excellent, but costs about a dollar a pound, which puts it entirely out of the question. What, then, can we use? We want something that tastes like coffee, smells like it, and looks like it. We have just the thing in the sweet potato. When properly prepared, I defy any one to detect the difference between it and a cup of pure Rio. Preparation--Peel your potatoes and slice them rather thin; dry them in the air or on a stove; then cut into pieces small enough to go into the coffee mil, then grind it. Two tablespoons full of ground coffee and three or four of ground potatoes will make eight or nine cups of coffee, clear, pure and well tasted.

The above is worthy of a trial. We have thoroughly tested its qualities, and can perceive no difference in taste from the genuine coffee. One table spoonful of ground coffee to two of the ground potatoe [*sic*] makes five cups full of a cheap, pleasant and healthy beverage. It is preferable to parch the potatoe [*sic*] in thin slices by the sun, as the parching or drying will be more regular, and not so apt to burn as when parched on a stove. We regard it as every way equal to Rio, Java, or the Mocha coffee.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1844: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

Our meat was all consumed; but we wished to reserve our bullocks for Christmas, which was, in every one of us, so intimately associated with recollections of happy days and merriment, that I was determined to make the coming season as merry as our circumstances permitted. This decision being final, everyone cheerfully submitted to a small allowance, and did his best to procure game.

1845: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

Part of the meat was cut up and dried, and part of it was roasted to take with us; a great part of it was given to the natives, who were baking and eating the whole day; and when they could eat no more meat, they went into the plains to collect "Imberbi" and Murnatt, to add the necessary quantum of vegetable matter to their diet. The sultry weather, however, caused a great part of the meat to become tainted and maggoty.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1663: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

We had this morning a great dispute between Mr. Gauden, Victualler of the Navy, and Sir J. Lawson, and the rest of the Commanders going against Argier, [Algiers] about their fish and keeping of Lent; which Mr. Gauden so much insists upon to have it observed, as being the only thing that makes up the loss of his dear bargain all the rest of the year.

DECEMBER 13

FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS

According to the Christian calendar, this is the feast day of Saint Lucy (Lucia). In ancient times this coincided with the shortest day of the year and the pagan celebrations of the return of the sun—which are of course of particular significance in the far north of Europe. Inevitably, St. Lucy became associated with the bringing of the light, and in Scandinavia, It is not likely to be coincidence that saffron buns are yellow, like the sun. In another ancient tradition, *lussesup*—literally a "cup of light" but actually a glass of spirits—would be given to the chieftain or other community leader.

A THIRTEEN CLUB DINNER

1896: New York

The Thirteen Club was formed in New York 1881 by a group determined to debunk the superstitions associated with the number 13. Their dinner meetings took place on the thirteenth of the month, and started and finished at thirteen minutes past the hour. There were always thirteen dishes and thirteen toasts. Members also had fun tempting fate in as many other ways as possible: spilling salt and wearing green for example, and decorating the dining room and table with as many symbols of death as they could devise.

Most importantly (or most dangerously, for those of a superstitious bent) they sat thirteen at each table. This was a particularly inauspicious thing to do, as there was a widely held belief that if this happened, one of the thirteen would be dead within twelve months. In parts of Europe gentlemen of good breeding and good conversation skills made themselves available as a *quatorzième* or fourteenth guest available to make up a safe number at short notice.

At their meeting on December 13, 1896, the club decided on an Austrian theme for their meal.

Austrian Dinner

of the

Thirteen Club

At Café Boulevard, 156, Second Avenue,

December 13, 1896, at 7.13pm

ASIETTEN.

Caviar Salat.

SUPPE.

Leberknödel.

FISCH.

Gefüllter Hecht.

ENTRÉE.

Steirisches Schöpsernes. Heurige Erdäpfel

BRATEN.

Wiener Backhendl.

Häupt-Salat. Gerösste Kartoffel.

COMPOT.

Zwetschken.

MEHLSPIESE.

Topfen-Taschkerl. Semmelbrösl.

Caffee Melange.

WEIN

Grinzinger Heurigen \$0.75

Bisamberger 1.00

Gumpoldskirchner 1.50.

THE POTATO

The role of Sir Walter Raleigh (1554–1618) in bringing the potato to England has been much disputed, and is no longer taken seriously by historians. There are several tenuous connections between Raleigh, Ireland, and the potato however,

and the myth refuses to go away.

There is an intriguing note, dated this day in 1693, in the records of the minutes of the Royal Society of London, which is relative here. The minutes state that “The President [Sir Robert Southwell] related that his grandfather brought potatoes into Ireland, who had them from Sir Walter Raleigh, after his return from Virginia.”

RESTAURANTS & HOTELS

1827: New York

Swiss brothers, Giovanni and Pietro Delmonico opened a café called “Delmonico and Brother, Confectioners” at 23 William Street on this day. Over the years and decades other family members joined the team, and they opened, moved, closed, and re-opened premises at a number of locations in New York, including a hotel. The business prospered, and they had the immense good fortune to bring their nephew, Lorenzo, into the business. Under Lorenzo’s constant attention to excellence in every detail, Delmonico’s Restaurant became synonymous with the highest standards of food and service.

A CACTUS DINNER

1907: Los Angeles

Dr. Leon Albert Landon celebrated the completion of his two-week “Cactus Diet Experiment” with a dinner to six of his physician colleagues on this night. The newspaper reported on the meal the next day:

The menu consisted of celery cactus soup, omelette with chopped cactus and green peppers, fried cactus, salad made of cactus fruit, lettuce, celery, sherbet flavored with fruit of cactus, and juice of cactus fruit as a drink. The guests expressed themselves as delighted with the menu and that it was very pleasant to the taste.

My experimental diet was, in a way, productive of surprises. I had expected to lose fully ten pounds in weight, though I confidently expected to keep up my strength. Not only did my strength continue unimpaired, but on weighing myself this morning I found I had gained half a pound

weighing myself this morning I found I had gained half a pound.

FOOD & IMMIGRANTS

1894: USA

The *New York Times* of this date contained an article on “How Food Is Sold to Immigrants at Ellis Island”:

Government Sells the Right to Maintain a Restaurant to the Highest Bidder, Who is Responsible to Nobody An Easy Matter for Him to Defraud His Ignorant Customers

When the immigrant has changed his European money for that which passes in this country, on landing at Ellis Island, his next business transaction in most instances is buying something to eat. Within ten feet of the money exchange is the restaurant, although, because of an iron railing, the immigrant must go through another room before he can reach it. The Government sells the right to maintain the restaurant at auction. Although the lines are short and the prices apparently close to the bottom notch, the great number of customers make the business a profitable one. In the competitive sale this privilege brought \$10,510 last April for a contract which will not expire until June 30, 1896. Felix Livingston secured the privilege. He says that he believes he has more customers than any other restaurant in the country. It is doubtful if one half of the 343,422 immigrants who landed at Ellis Island last year knew at just what stage of their transit through the big building they ceased to be under the direct orders and supervision of the United States authorities and free to set for themselves.

Some whom a reporter for the *New York Times* saw last week walked up to the lunch counter and made their purchases in precisely the same perfunctory and routine way that they walked past the inspectors and showed their documentary evidence to enter the country. No complaint is made that he does not manage it as well as any one could or should. But, if it was in dishonest hands, there is a fine chance for defrauding ignorant immigrants. It is doubtful that there is another restaurant in the world where precisely the same conditions exist as at this one. It is on Government property, it is owned by private individuals. The Government assumes to maintain jurisdiction over it. Many of its customers do not know how to

count the money which they pay for what they buy. None of them ever saw it before; most of them will never see it again. Their purchases are made in a hurry. They do not ask for prices; there is no time. These are posted conspicuously, but many customers cannot read, and the formality is useless in their cases. They do not ask what is to be had in many instances. They take such quantities as are put into a paper bag and handed to them. They give a piece of money and are give some change. They add the paper bag containing the food to their other bundles and pass on, stolid, stupid, half-dazed, out into the United States.

The man who conducts the restaurant alone knows what his sales amount to. He makes no report to the Government as to the number of sales or their values. The Government sells the privilege; the man who buys it does the rest. No one else—not even the immigrant—has much to say about it.

Why should not the Government control this business, and by a businesslike system of reports make it certain that the immigrants are protected so long as they are on Government property and practically under Government jurisdiction?

The counter where the immigrants buy their first meal is at about the middle of the building at the north side. There is another around in the big room where the immigrants gather before taking the boat for New York City. The first one is just at the head of the stairs by which the horde of Europeans bound for distant States pass down to the big baggage room. This location might be made to cut an important figure in the business. Few of the immigrants can escape the eye of the man who sells pies, bread, and bologna. It is probably a convenience to all concerned to have it there, too. There are odd things in the business of this restaurant. Upon the wall behind the counter is the following bill of fare:

- Rye bread, two pounds . . . 10c
- Wheat bread, two pounds . . . 10c
- Wheat bread, one pound . . . 5c
- Swedish bread, two pounds . . . 10c

- Rolls, each . . . 1c
- Pies, each . . . 10c
- Half-pie . . . 5c
- Bologna sausage, per pound . . . 20c
- Boiled ham, per pound . . . 30c
- Corned beef, per pound . . . 25c
- Cheese, per pound . . . 20c
- Coffee, per cup . . . 5c
- Milk, per pint . . . 5c
- Soup, with bread, per bowl . . . 10c
- Sandwich, ham or corned beef, each . . . 7c
- Sausage and bread, each . . . 13c, 2 for 25c
- Soda water, ginger ale, or sarsaparilla, each, small . . . 7c
- Do, large . . . 20c
- Smoking tobacco . . . 10c
- Cigars, each . . . 5 and 10c

At the bottom of the bill is this notice, in large letters: “Prices are regulated by the Commissioner of Immigration.” This notice is posted by virtue of a clause in the contract, which the successful bidder for the privilege makes, under which the Commissioner is at liberty to fix the prices which may be charged for bread, sausage, soup, &c.

No change has been made in prices since this system went into effect. There must have been a good profit in the restaurant at that time, for immigration was heavier than it has been this year, which now brings \$10,510, was

awarded for \$2,400. Under the old system, this award was made without competition, and was considered one of the choice bits of political patronage. This restaurant is no place for an epicure. The bread comes in big loaves. They would make dangerous missiles. The immigrants like them to eat. The pies may or may not be toothsome. No immigrant was found who had eaten one and could speak enough English to tell the reporter how they tasted. After having seen them, hearsay evidence was all the reporter was looking for. The sausage had the appearance of the usual bologna.

Few college graduates have sufficient knowledge of the modern languages to keep this restaurant. It requires a linguist to sell these pies and bologna. The process, as observed the other day, is peculiar. The quantity purchased was fixed by the man behind the counter, and he depended somewhat on the length of the journey ahead of the immigrant. As the half-dazed European approached the stairs where he was to look after his baggage, the man behind the counter shouted at him, in a foreign tongue. Presumably he asked where the immigrant was going, for the latter produced his ticket and showed it to the man behind the counter, sometimes saying something in his native tongue.

“Scranton, eh?” repeated the man who dispensed bread and sausage. The immigrant nodded and grinned, knowing as much about the location of Scranton as he did about Tasmania. Before the grin died away the restaurant man had made up a “Scranton lunch,” that is, one which was supposed to be enough to last until the immigrant reached that place. This consisted in most instances of one big loaf of bread, one bologna, a chunk of cheese, and a bottle of beer or ginger ale. If the immigrant had been going further more luncheon would have been sold to him.

These things were put in a bag of tough brown paper, the price was paid, and the immigrant, stolid as a graven image, passed down to the baggage room. This process was repeated at a rapid rate. Bread and bologna went in a steady stream of brown paper bags and cash came to the restaurant. Some days 3,000 luncheons of this type were disposed of.

The immigrant does not know whether he has his money's worth or not. There is no record of his transaction. He makes no protest at this treatment, and if he wanted to, it would be difficult for him to make out a case against the restaurant. One considerable branch of the restaurant business consists of furnishing food to immigrants who are for any reason “detained.” There

is always a good-sized colony of these, men, women, and children. Some are kept for days, a few for weeks, pending the determination of whether or not they shall be returned. The steamship companies bring these immigrants are, by law, obliged to pay for the food they eat while at this Island.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1492: Bahamas

Christopher Columbus, on his first voyage, had arrived in the Bahamas by this day (although he thought he was in Japan).

When at last they [the local people] had lost their fear, they . . . brought what they had to eat, which was bread of niames [yams] that is roots like large carrots which they sow and cultivate in all their lands, it is their staple food. They make bread from these roots and boil and roast them, and they smell like chestnuts and anyone who eats them would think he was eating chestnuts. . . . They gave . . . bread and fish and whatever they had. And as [they] had understood that the admiral wished to have a parrot . . . they brought them parrots and gave them as many as they asked.

There was confusion between the sweet potato and the yam in this journal entry.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1660: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys: “[A]nd so I step to my Lady’s, where was Sir John Lawson and Capt. Holmes; and there we dined and had very good red wine of my Lady’s own making in England.”

English wine was well known in Pepys’s time, and there is a resurgence of interest in it in recent decades, due in part perhaps to the effects of climate change.

1794: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde: “Busy all the Morning almost in

bottling two tubs of Gin, that came by Moonshine this Morn' very early.”

This is another example of Woodforde's willing participation in smuggling (see March 29, re: the tea)

DECEMBER 14

1901: At Sea

The Lunch menu aboard the S.S. *Barbarossa* of the Norddeutscher Lloyd Line on this day was written in both German and English.

Potage bretonne Consommé

Pork-chops bayonnaise Soufflé Parmentier

Roast Chicken

Baked Potatoes

Stewed prunes and apples

Cream rolls

Coffee

To order:

Hot: Beefsteakk

Capsicum meat

Boiled rice

Cold: Ham, smoked, boiled

Sablath sausage Liver sausage

Corned beef Brawn Beef-tongue Smoked beef

Smoked salmon and sprats

Herrings Sardelles Anchovies

Salads

Potato-, Bean-, Celery-, Cabbage-, Italian,

Mustard cucumbers Pickles Radishes

Cheese: Camembert, Gorgonzola, Swiss.

FOOD & WAR

1777: American Revolutionary War

From the diary of Albigeance Waldo, surgeon of Washington's at Valley Forge:

Prisoners and Deserters are continually coming in. The Army which has been surprisingly healthy hitherto, now begins to grow sickly from the continued fatigues they have suffered this Campaign. Yet they still show a spirit of Alacrity and Contentment not to be expected from so young Troops. I am Sick—discontented—and out of humour. Poor food—hard lodging—Cold Weather—fatigue—Nasty Cloaths—nasty Cookery—Vomit half my time—smoak'd out my senses—the Devil's in't—I can't Endure it—Why are we sent here to starve and Freeze—What sweet Felicities have I left at home; A charming Wife—pretty Children—Good Beds—good food—good Cookery—all agreeable—all harmonious. Here all Confusion—smoke and Cold—hunger and filthiness—A pox on my bad luck. There comes a bowl of beef soup—full of burnt leaves and dirt, sickish enough to make a Hector spue—away with it Boys—I'll live like the Chameleon upon Air. Poh! Poh! crys Patience within me—you talk like a fool.

1940: Germany, World War II

The state secretary, Herbert Backe, released a confidential report on the food situation in Europe to the Reich government on this day, and it caused quite a reaction. The immediate issue was that the first wartime harvest had been poor, so there was the imminent probability of serious food shortages and even

starvation for the German people. A plan was outlined for rationing, and another short-term solution was the confiscation of foodstuffs from countries already under Nazi occupation. The other necessity was to ensure that Germany, which relied heavily on imports, was made blockade-proof. The solution suggested in the report was to attack the Soviet Union, confiscate existing food and livestock, and reduce local demand by disposing of the local population by starving, deporting, or liquidating them.

BLACK VELVET

1861: England

Prince Albert, the consort of Queen Victoria, died on this day. It is said that the drink known as “Black Velvet” was invented on this day at London’s Brooks Club, when the steward ordered that even the champagne should be in mourning. The drink consists of equal amounts of Guinness Stout and champagne.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1911: Antarctica

Roald Amundsen reaches the South Pole on this day. His party had subsisted by killing and eating their sled dogs.

One gets out of the way of protracted ceremonies in those regions—the shorter they are the better. Everyday life began again at once. When we had got the tent up, Hanssen set about slaughtering Helge, and it was hard for him to have to part from his best friend. Helge had been an uncommonly useful and good-natured dog; without making any fuss he had pulled from morning to night, and had been a shining example to the team. But during the last week he had quite fallen away, and on our arrival at the Pole there was only a shadow of the old Helge left. He was only a drag on the others, and did absolutely no work. One blow on the skull, and Helge had ceased to live. “What is death to one is food to another,” is a saying that can scarcely find a better application than these dog meals. Helge was portioned out on the spot, and within a couple of hours there was nothing left of him but his teeth and the tuft at the end of his tail. This was the second of our eighteen dogs that we had lost. . . . We now had sixteen dogs left, and these we

intended to divide into two equal teams, leaving Bjaaland's sledge behind.

Of course, there was a festivity in the tent that evening—not that champagne corks were popping and wine flowing, no, we contented ourselves with a little piece of seal meat each, and it tasted well and did us good. There was no other sign of festival indoors. Outside we heard the flag flapping in the breeze. Conversation was lively in the tent that evening, and we talked of many things. Perhaps too, our thoughts sent messages home of what we had done.

1912: Antarctica

The Mawson Antarctic Expedition struck disaster on this day:

On the 14th December, Xavier Mertz was leading, on skis, and signalled that he had spotted a snow-covered crevasse. Douglas Mawson made it across with his sled, but the snow bridge collapsed as Belgrave Ninnis crossed with his loaded sled. Mawson and Mertz could not see Ninnis, nor did he respond to their calls, and the two were unable to climb down even to reach an injured dog on a ledge not far below. Mawson and Metz were forced to continue without their comrade, six of their dogs, their tent and spare clothing, and most of their food. The remaining sled had only ten days rations for the men, but no food for the dogs.

CHERRY PRESERVES

1503: Provence., France

This was the birthday of Michel de Nostredame, better known as Nostradamus. Nostradamus was a physician, but he is best known for his book of prophecies, *Centuries Asrtologiques*, which he published in 1555. In the same year he also published *Excellent er Moulr Utile Opuscule a tous necessaire qui desirent avoir connaissance de plusieurs exq uises recettes* (“An Excellent and Most Useful Little Work Essential to All Who Wish to Become Acquainted with Some Exquisite Recipes”). This was not altogether a surprise work from a physician, as food as medicine and medicine as food was an accepted concept in ancient times.

How to make a jam or preserve with heart-cherries,

which the Italians call “amarenes”

Take some of the nicest heart-cherries you can find, good and ripe. . . . Take three pounds or so of them. Then take a pound-and-a-half of sugar, and let it dissolve in the juice of three or four pounds of other heart-cherries. And take care that once the juice has been extracted you add it to the sugar at once. . . . Boil it up as quickly as possible. . . . When you have removed all the scum and can see that your sugar is as red as it was to start with and is thoroughly clarified . . . immediately put in the heart-cherries to boil, stirring them neither too much nor too little, until they are perfect, all the while removing the scum on the top with a spatula. Do not take them off the fire until they are cooked right through. . . . Then put one drop on a pewter plate, and once you see that it will not run down in either direction, they are ready . . . pour them while still hot into small containers holding three or four ounces each. You will then have beautiful red, whole heart-cherries with a wonderful taste that will keep for a long time.

. . . [I]f a sick person takes just a single one, it will be to him like a balsam or other restorative.

DECEMBER 15

WELLINGTON PUDDING

1827: England

The Duke of Wellington made his entry into Buckingham on this day, and the locals put on a fine celebration which included making a pudding of monumental proportions. The *Times* described the event a few days later.

The Duke of Wellington made a public entry into Buckingham on Saturday, at 11 o'clock, and received an Address [extolling his military achievements] reviously voted by the Corporation. His Grace was escorted from Wootton, the seat of the Marquis of Chandos, by a large body of farmers, and was met near Buckingham by an escort of yeomanry. The ox intended to be roasted whole was drawn through the town on Friday decorated with ribands, and preceded by a band of music, and on Saturday the ceremony took place; and a “Wellington Pudding” was exhibited to the

public, which is this day to be distributed to the children for whom it was designed. It is a five-bushel pudding, and was put into the copper at four o'clock on Monday afternoon, at the White Hart Inn, and boiled from that time until seven o'clock on Thursday night. The following are the ingredients of which it is composed:—Flour, 140 lb; plums, 84 lb; suet, 70 lb; eggs, 140; sugar, 14 lb; nutmegs and other spices, 2 lb; brandy and wine, 2 ½ gallons. The weight was 450 lb. The ingredients filled a five-bushel bag, and left 80 lb. for another.

A PLEASANT WARTIME ECONOMY

1915: Britain, World War I

The *Times* ran an article on this day on using oysters as a wartime economy measure, and giving a number of recipes for them.

A Pleasant Wartime Economy

The economically minded might well turn their attention to oysters, which are just now cheaper than they have ever been, and on which there is no waste. Cooking oysters can be bought for 6d. a dozen, and when it is considered that 100 oysters contain 4 lb. of “meat” (this is a fishmonger’s own description), the price will be seen to be low enough. The special qualities of oysters are their digestibility and the proportion they contain of organic phosphorus, which is a necessary brain food. . . . One of the most delicious dishes for breakfast or supper is a few British rock oysters opened, then rolled in flour or in egg and breadcrumbs and fried to a delicate brown with bacon. Other oyster recipes are:

Baked Oysters

Take 50 opened oysters. Place them in an enamelled baking tin, previously buttered. Sprinkle them with a mixture of breadcrumbs, mace, pepper, salt, and cayenne (to taste.) Put a few lumps of butter on top, and pour in a little milk to moisten them. Bake for 20 minutes to half an hour. This is a delicious dish.

FOOD & WAR

1777: American Revolutionary War

From the diary of Albigeance Waldo, surgeon of Washington's at Valley Forge:

Quiet. Eat Pessimmens [persimmons], found myself better for their Lenient Opperation. Went to a house, poor and small, but good food within—eat too much from being so long Abstemious, thro' want of palatables. Mankind are never truly thankfull for the Benefits of life, until they have experienc'd the want of them. The Man who has seen misery knows best how to enjoy good.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1913: Antarctica, Mawson Expedition

The remaining two members of the expedition were in a bad situation. Their companion, Belgrave Ninnis had fallen to his death down a crevasse the previous day, the sled with most of the food going with him. Mawson and Mertz were left with only ten day's supply of food for themselves, none for the dogs, and were still more than 500 km from their base.

Douglas Mawson and Xavier Mertz killed the weakest of the dogs, and ate every bit of it, including the paws. Over the next ten days the pattern continued, until all the dogs were gone. Unfortunately, the men did not realize that by eating the dogs' livers, they were consuming toxic amounts of Vitamin A. The usual diet of sled dogs is high in Vitamin A, and the liver stores the surplus amounts. One kilogram of liver from a sled dog can contain a toxic dose of Vitamin A for a human. The side effects include dizziness, lethargy, as well skin drying, loss, and fissuring. These symptoms soon became evident in the men, and on January 8, Xavier Mertz died of Vitamin A poisoning.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1903: USA

Italo Marchiony, of New York, New York, was granted Patent No. 746,971 for a

mold “particularly such molding apparatuses as are used in the manufacture of ice cream cups and the like.” His mold was based on the principle of a hinged waffle iron, and allowed multiple cups to be made at once, which were easy to remove.

DIETARY ADVICE

1926: USA

From John Harvey Kellogg’s speech before the Chicago Medical Society, on this day:

Unfortunately, the average citizen who interests himself in dietetics does not know where to go for sound information and is likely to be entrapped by any fad which happens to be at the moment on the rising tide of popularity. One such which, though never likely to become extremely popular, is just now doing considerable harm, is the fasting fad. Some years ago fasting was heralded and widely exploited as a cure-all for chronic maladies of all sorts and was especially commended as a psychic illuminator, but the present interest is chiefly among women and especially college girls who while in good health foolishly desire to reduce their weight to meet the demand of fashion for slimness. Persons who are overfat as a result of overeating may very properly lessen their food intake; but a reduction of weight below the normal standard by a horizontal cut in the bill of fare, is positively dangerous.

PYTHON & SPAM

1970: Britain

The popular British television show *Monty Python’s Flying Circus* ended with a famous skit on SPAMTM. In the skit, a couple enter a restaurant and attempt to order a meal. To their intense frustration every item on the menu contains SPAM. There is, for example—“spam, egg, sausage, and spam” and “spam, spam, spam, spam, baked beans, spam, spam, and spam.” Many Britons who had lived through the war, when SPAM was one of the few meat products easily available, found it highly amusing.

The skit lasts two minutes, during which the word SPAM is mentioned ninety-four times. A chorus of Vikings sings a song about SPAM during the skit about “lovely SPAM, wonderful SPAM” and in the end, they drown out the customers who are desperately trying to order their meal.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1662: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

Thence called at the Major-General's, Sir R. Browne, about my being assessed armes to the militia; but he was abroad; and so driving through the backside of the Shambles in Newgate Market, my coach plucked down two pieces of beef into the dirt, upon which the butchers stopped the horses, and a great rout of people in the street, crying that he had done him 40s and L5 worth of hurt; but going down, I saw that he had done little or none; and so I give them a shilling for it and they were well contented.

1762: London, England

James Boswell, the Scottish biographer of Samuel Johnson, was in London. He wrote in his diary on this day:

The enemies of the people of England who would have them considered in the worst light represent them as selfish, beef-eaters, and cruel. In this view I resolved today to be a true-born old Englishman. I went into the City to Dolly's Steakhouse in Paternoster Row, and swallowed my dinner by myself to fulfil the charge of selfishness; I had a large fat beefsteak to fulfil the charge of beef-eating; and I went at five-o'clock to the Royal Cockpit in St James' Park to fulfil the charge of cruelty.

A beefsteak-house is a most excellent place to dine at. You come in there to a warm, comfortable, large room, where a number of people are sitting at table. You take whatever you like, which you get well and cleverly dressed. You may either chat or not as you like. Nobody minds you and you pay very reasonably. My dinner (beef, bread, and beer and waiter) was only a shilling. The waiters make a great deal of money by these pennies.

DECEMBER 16

A GUMBO DINNER

1803: New Orleans, Louisiana

A few days before New Orleans was formally handed over by France, Pierre Clément de Laussat, the French colonial prefect and commissioner for Louisiana, hosted a ball for hundreds of guests. Even the break-out of a fire only temporarily interrupted the fun, and the party lasted until after 8 o'clock the next morning. The buffet supper was said to be most elaborate. Laussat noted in his memoir that "As a local touch, 24 gumbos were served, six or eight of which were sea turtle."

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1990

GenPharm International created the first GM dairy cow designed to produce lactoferrin—a human milk protein with important immune function—for use in infant formula. Herman the Bull was the first genetically modified or transgenic bovine in the world. All of Herman's fifty-five progeny inherited the lactoferrin producing gene.

FOOD & WAR

1773: American Revolutionary War. The Boston Tea Party

When the British parliament enacted a revenue-raising act aimed at the colonies (see May 10, it became the patriotic duty of Americans to avoid purchasing or drinking tea (a process which ensured the persisting preference for coffee in America.). The determination to shake off the British yoke was already strong at this time, and the incidents which eventuated on this day as a result of the tax acted as a significant spur to the development of the revolutionary movement.

On December 16, 1773, officials refused to pay the tax on the tea, or return three shiploads of tea to Britain. That evening a group of men—the number is

uncertain—some dressed as Indians, boarded the vessels and dumped 342 chests of tea into Boston harbor.

George Hewes, one of the participants described the event:

We then were ordered by our commander to open the hatches and take out all the chests of tea and throw them overboard, and we immediately proceeded to execute his orders, first cutting and splitting the chests with our tomahawks, so as thoroughly to expose them to the effects of the water.

In about three hours from the time we went on board, we had thus broken and thrown overboard every tea chest to be found in the ship, while those in the other ships were disposing of the tea in the same way, at the same time. We were surrounded by British armed ships, but no attempt was made to resist us.

. . . The next morning, after we had cleared the ships of the tea, it was discovered that very considerable quantities of it were floating upon the surface of the water; and to prevent the possibility of any of its being saved for use, a number of small boats were manned by sailors and citizens, who rowed them into those parts of the harbor wherever the tea was visible, and by beating it with oars and paddles so thoroughly drenched it as to render its entire destruction inevitable.

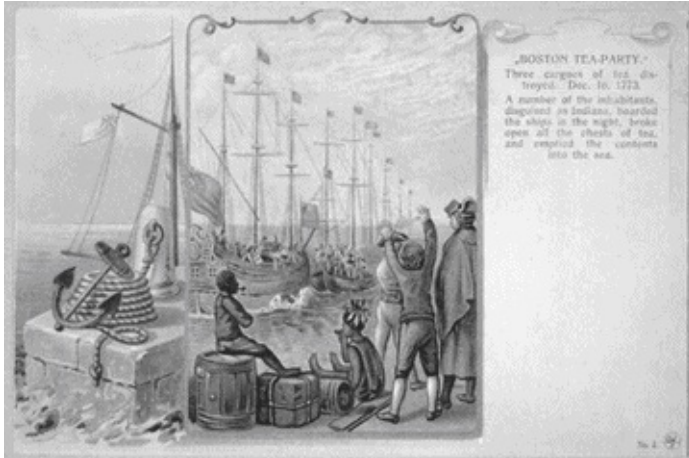
John Adams was not in Boston at the time, but his response, when he heard was:

Last night three cargoes of Bohea Tea were emptied into the sea. This is the most magnificent moment of all. There is a dignity, a majesty, a sublimity, in this last effort of the Patriots that I greatly admire. . . . This destruction of the tea is so bold, so daring, so firm, intrepid and inflexible, and it must have so important consequences, and so lasting, that I can't but consider it as an epoch of history.

“The Ballad of the Tea Party”

Overboard she goes, my boys, heave ho where darkling waters roar;

We love our cup of tea full well, but we love our freedom more.



American Revolutionary War. The Boston Tea Party.

(Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division [Reproduction number e.g., LC-USZC4-1582])

“A MARTHA WASHINGTON TEA PARTY”

1884: USA

According to a newspaper report, a Martha Washington tea party was held on this evening in Emmitsburg, Maryland, on his day.

The fountain Association of Emmitsburg began its Martha Washington tea party according to announcement, on Tuesday evening [16th], and notwithstanding the unfavorable weather, made a very credible opening. The rooms were tastefully decorated with flags, evergreens, pitchers, and other devices such as the cunning hands of the ladies are so skillful and arranging for such occasions.

The ladies themselves were arrayed in the style of the olden time. Tables were arrayed in the different apartments, that were richly set off for silverware, flowers, *etc.* The bill of fare consisted of cold turkey, oysters, fried, stewed and raw, with the appropriate accompaniments; cakes, ice cream, tea, coffee, jellies, oranges, celery *etc.* etc., everything in fact to please the taste, and these were supplied at such low rates as could not fail to suit all persons. Through the rise in the temperature of Wednesday, the

snow had all disappeared by the evening of that day, and the roads being a wretched, persons from the country were prevented from attending, and yet the attractions of the occasion proved equal to draw an amount of patronage that could not but be encouraging to the managers and others officiating in the premise.

Martha Washington's Great Cake

Take a peck of flower & put to it 10 eggs beaten; take out 3 of y^e whites, put in nutmeg, cinamond, cloves, & mace of each a quarter of an ounce; a full quart of Ale barme, & mingle with y^e flower two pound of fresh butter. when it is almost kneaded, put 6 spoonfuls of hot water to it, and 10 pound of currans, & halfe a pownd of sugar beaten, let it lye a while by y^e fire to rise & then bake it.

The recipe is said to come from a manuscript cook book of family recipes given to Martha Washington at her marriage to her first husband, Daniel Custis, in 1747. It is said that this is the cake she sent to George Washington on December 26, the day after the Battle of Trenton.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1492: Bahamas

From the records of the voyage of Christopher Columbus.:

They raise on these lands crops of yams, which are small branches, at the foot of which grow roots like carrots, which serve as bread. They powder and knead them, and make them into bread; then they plant the same branch in another part, which again sends out four or five of the same roots, which are very nutritious, with the taste of chestnuts. Here they have the largest the Admiral had seen in any part of the world, for he says that they have the same plant in Guinea. At this place they were as thick as a man's leg.

Columbus has confused yams (*niamas*, *Dioscorea*), which he encountered in Africa, with sweet potatoes (*ajes*, *Ipomoea*).

1660: America

From the log of the *Mayflower*. The landing place of the Pilgrims was finally determined by the supply of beer running out: “For we could not now take time for further search (to land our ship) our victuals being much spent, especially our Beere.”

1844: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt’s journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia. The men make a tart from native lemons, but unfortunately for us do not describe the method. Given that they had no oven, it must have been baked on the coals.

Yesterday in coming through the scrub, we had collected a large quantity of ripe native lemons, of which, it being Sunday, we intended to make a tart; but, as my companions were absent, the treat was deferred until their return, which was on Monday morning, when we made them into a dish very like gooseberry-fool; they had a very pleasant acid taste, and were very refreshing. They are of a light yellow colour, nearly round, and about half an inch in diameter; the volatile oil of the rind was not at all disagreeable.

1859: Australia

John McDouall Stuart, on his third expedition into the inland of the continent wrote:

Louden Springs. To-day we have discovered a large fresh-water hole in a creek joining the George and coming from the south-west. The water seems to be permanent; it is half a mile long and seems to be deep. On the banks a number of natives have been encamped; round about their fires were large quantities of the shells of the fresh-water mussel, the fish from which they had been eating: I should think this a very good proof of the water being permanent.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1826: New York

In a letter to his daughter Eliza, John Pintard regrets the “olden times.”

When everything was cheap and plenty. . . . Every female was instructed in the art of cooking preserves, & pastry, as well as the more ordinary duties of housekeeping. . . . No whole hours, days, weeks & years, wasted in fingering a harpsichord . . . dinner hour was genteel & late at 2, tea visits at 4, and home just before candle light. . . . Your dear Sister is determined to be a notable housekeeper. This week she has put up a handsome shoat of 170 lbs. So that we should have plenty of sausages, head cheese, and roasting pieces to treat the younkers.

1843: Australia

Annabella Boswell described in her journal the produce from the garden at Lake Innes House, Port Macquarie: “We make pleasant raids on the garden every afternoon, The first ripe figs were gathered on the 6th, but now there are Chinese peaches and mulberries as well as quantities of figs.”

1862: Canada

Joseph T. Halpenny left his home and family to join the goldrush, and wrote home to his family to tell them of his adventures.

Vancouver Island, Victoria.

Opportunity favours me with a few moments to send you a few lines by steamer Sanfrancisco it only stays 3 hours in harbour and 2 of them is already past which leave me only one to write and post it. I cannot give you a full account of our trip in this letter. . . . Our supplies of food was almost exhausted some living and (?) 2 meals of fresh beef which soon reduced to one. Some not (illegible) some in a state of starvation killing and eating any animal they could find. Skunks were the most numerous 2 or 3 being killed every day and eaten with a good relish. Some of our horses die from fatigue they were (illegible). we with some others had some (illegible) though they were reduced to fourty we killed them divided them amongs the most needy which no doubt saved many from actual starvation and death.

1874: At Sea

Thomas Payne Judkins and his wife were en route from England to New Zealand aboard the sailing ship *Assaye*. They left on September 1, 1874. On 16th December he wrote:

I forgot to notice that on Monday last we all had a double quantity of flour for the week, instead of flour and bread, though, to be sure, we had bread on Monday, but we are to have no more made by the baker. It would have been well for us if we had had flour instead of bread all the voyage, for we are already dotting over the beneficial results of the recent change. We used to have bread on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday in each week, so that if there had been no change we should have had bread served out this morning, but we have had to “turn over a new leaf,” and, thanks to providence, it just serves us right, for we have got nice light bread “home-made,” surely. This bread is made in a peculiar manner, and as it is likely that those who may read this diary may wish to know the supposed secret, I will make it known. We at first beg or borrow a bit of dough that has been fermented, crumble it into some flour, pour on hot water, knead it, set it aside for about six hours, cut a bit off to be used in the same manner next time, then mould the rest and bake it in a slow oven. This bit of dough, saved from time to time, forms as good yeast, and makes as light a bread as any that can be procured. I have been informed of another method of bread-making; that is, make batter with flour and water, put it by till it becomes sour, then use it as yeast.

LAST MEAL

1976: Utah, USA

Gary Gilmore was executed at dawn on 17 December. His final meal, the evening before, was hamburger, potatoes, and eggs.

DECEMBER 17

SOW-DAY

There used to be a tradition in the parish of Sandwick, in the Orkney Islands of

Scotland, for every family that had a herd of swine, to kill a sow on the seventeenth day of December. The practice was so old that its origins are lost, but it certainly has pagan roots. Norse mythology has the chariot of the sun drawn by a boar, and December 17 is close to the northern winter solstice and the return of the sun. There are parallels with the sacrifice of a boar to the sun at the time of the new moon by the ancient Goths. By some accounts this was a boar made of meal and by others that both a real and a bread-boar were sacrificed. The ancient Romans and the ancient Egyptians also sacrificed swine on specific feast days.

STATE DINNER

1957: France

President Rene Coty entertained President Eisenhower and the other visiting NATO chiefs of government at a state dinner on this night. The menu was:

Consomme aux paillors d'or

Supreme de soles cardinal

Faisan roti chatelaine

Foie gras de lands aux raisins

Salade Tourangelle

Parfair glace chanzy

Petits fours

The wines were: Riesling (Grande Reserve) 1953, Chateau Haut Brioni 1937, La Tache (Domaine Romani Conti) 1953, Veuve Clicquot dry 1949.

FOOD & WAR

1864: American Civil War

From the Diary of John S. Jackman, a Confederate soldier: "Pleasant day for

winter. We are living well. Have good fresh beef, fresh pork, flour, sorghum, rice and so on, issued in abundance. We make the molasses into candy—have ‘candy-pullings’ among ourselves.”

Here is a Civil War–era recipe for Molasses Candy, from *The Art of Confectionery* (1865) by J. E. Tilton:

Molasses-Candy

Candy of various kinds is made from molasses, such as stick molasses-candy, pulled candy, taffy, Everton taffy, &c.. The sticks may be single, twisted, braided, or flattened. Almonds, peanuts, hickory-nuts, &c, are often stirred into molasses-candy, which is also flavored with different essences according to taste. Stick molasses-candy is pulled with the hands, on a hook, until it is white. Tally is poured into pans, and left to cool in a hard, darkcolored sheet about an inch thick. Molasses-candy is improved by the addition of bicarbonate of soda, dry and finely pulverized, in the proportion of half a teaspoonful to a quart of molasses: this is stirred into the syrup just as it begins to grow thick, and serves to whiten it, and render it tender.

Best white Molasses-Candy

One pound of granulated sugar, one pint Stewart’s syrup; boil until it is quite thick when dropped into cold water; then add one pint of best Porto-Rico molasses, and three or four tablespoonfuls of vinegar; boil to the snap; remove from the fire, and stir in quickly half a small teaspoonful of soda, and flavor with essence of lemon; pour on to a marble slab, and work quite white. This will make a superior article to the best usually sold at the confectioners’. A superior article may be made using all Porto-Rico molasses instead of the syrup; and good with less or no sugar.

THE IRISH FAMINE

1846: Ireland

Nicholas Cummins, a justice of the peace “of a Unionist persuasion,” visited the western portion of County Cork on this day, and saw for himself the horrors of

starvation. He wrote a letter to the Duke of Wellington, appealing for his help, and describing the situation in graphic detail. The letter was eventually published in the London *Times*, and it has become one of the most famous documents of the famine.

Without apology or preface, I presume so far to trespass on your Grace as to state to you, and, by the use of your illustrious name, to present to the British public the following statement of what I have myself seen within the last three days:—

Having for many years been connected with the western portion of the County of Cork, and possessing some small property there, I thought it right personally to investigate the truth of the several lamentable accounts which had reached me of the appalling state of misery to which that part of the country was reduced. I accordingly went on the 15th. inst. to Skibbereen, and to give the instance of one townland which I visited, as an example of the state of the entire coast district, I shall state simply what I there saw.

It is situated on the eastern side of Castlehaven Harbour and is named South Reen, in the parish of Myross. Being aware that I should have to witness scenes of frightful hunger, I provided myself with as much bread as five men could carry, and on reaching the spot I was surprised to find the wretched hamlet apparently deserted. I entered some of the hovels to ascertain the cause, and the scenes that presented themselves were such no tongue or pen can convey the slightest idea of. In the first six famished and ghastly skeletons, to all appearance dead, were huddled in a corner on some filthy straw, their sole covering what seemed a ragged horse-cloth, naked above the knees. I approached in horror, and found by a low moaning they were alive, they were in fever—four children, a woman, and at what had once been a man. It is impossible to go through the details, suffice to say, that in a few minutes I was surrounded by at least 200 of such phantoms, such frightful spectres as no words can describe. By far the greater number were delirious, either from famine or fever. Their demonic yells are still yelling in my ears, and their horrible images are fixed upon my brain.

My heart sickens at the recital, but I must go on. In another case—decency would forbid what follows, but it must be told—my clothes were nearly torn off in my endeavours to escape from the throng of pestilence around, when my neck cloth was seized from behind by a grip which compelled me to turn. I found myself grasped by a woman with an infant just born in her

to turn, I found myself grasped by a woman with an infant, just born, in her arms, and the remains of a filthy sack across her loins—the sole covering of herself and babe. The same morning the police opening a house on the adjoining lands, which was observed shut for many days, and two frozen corpses were found lying upon the mud floor half devoured by the rats.

A mother, herself in fever, was seen the same day to drag out the corpse of her child, a girl about twelve, perfectly naked, and leave it half covered with stones. In another house, within 500 yards of the cavalry station at Skibbereen, the dispensary doctor found seven wretches lying, unable to move under the same cloak, one had been dead for many hours, but the others were unable to move themselves or the corpse.

To what purpose should I multiply such cases? If these be not sufficient, neither would they hear who has the power to send relief, and do not, even “though one came from the dead.”

Let them, however, believe and tremble that they shall one day hear the Judge of all the Earth pronounce their tremendous doom, with the addition, “I was hungered and ye gave Me no meat; thirsty and ye gave Me no drink; naked, and he clothed Me not.” But I forget to whom this is addressed. My Lord, you are an old and justly honoured man. It is yet in your power to add other honour to your age, to fix another star, and that the brightest in your galaxy of glory. You have access to our young and gracious Queen,—lay these things before her. She is a woman, she will not allow decency to be outraged. She has at her command the means of at least mitigating the suffering of the wretched survivors in this tragedy. They will soon be few indeed in the district I speak of if help be longer withheld. Once more, my Lord Duke, in the name of starving thousands, I implore you, break the frigid and flimsy chain of official etiquette, and save the land of your birth—the kindred of the gallant Irish blood which you have so often seen lavished to support the honour of the British name—and let there be inscribed upon your tomb, Servata Hibernia.

FOOD & THE LAW

1651: Scotland

With the close of the Third English Civil War in 1651, the Cromwell turned his attention to the control of Scotland. The headquarters for his military force in the

attention to the control of Scotland. The headquarters for the military force in the country was Leith.

A Proclamation Concerning Bread, made by the Deputy-Governor of Leith

Ordered: That from henceforth no Forreign Baker, not inhabiting in Leith, shall from and after the 19 instant, presume to bring into and vend any manner of bread whatsoever within this Garison, which shall not upon the due search and trial of one or more honest men appointed for that purpose, be found sound, sufficient, wholesome, and due weight, according to the price of corn and the Book of Rates, upon pain of having their bread seized on for the use of the poor of this Garison.

And further, that all Bakers of this Town or elsewhere, set their own marks upon their respective loaves, and that they sell their bread in the usuall Market place at the Bridge end, on their several market-dayes, which shal be on Fridayes and Tuesdayes, and not to run from house to house; And that no loaf be made but halfpenny and two penny, and so higher, according to Assize.

And further, it is Ordered, that the Bakers of this Town have the like liberty to vend and sell bread in Edenburgh, or other places adjacent, on their Market-dayes, as they have here at Leith.

Lastly, that the Order be observed in this Garison, upon the like penalty of forfeiting their bread to the poor.

T. WILKS.

To be Proclaimed by beat of Drum, and affixed upon the most publick places of this Garison, and places adjacent.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1776: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde:

Busy this morning and day in Brewing some Ale being the first time of
having since I came to Weston. I had my Malt and Hops of Mr Dalmer of

brewing since I came to weston. I had my malt and Hopps of Mr Palmer of Morton. I brewed only 1 Vesell of 36 gallons and I allowed one Coomb of Malt and one pound and a half of Hops, which I think will make tolerable good Ale.

1791: Nova Scotia

From John Clarkson's *Mission to America*, his account of his voyage to Nova Scotia to recruit Christian ex-slaves known as Black Loyalists, for resettlement in Sierra Leone.

Inspected into the remainder of the Beef & Pork, breakfasted with Mr. Hartshorne.

A schooner arrived from Annapolis with 80 people on board, provided places to receive them, and gave orders for their landing immediately-finished taking an account of all the Annapolis people-Gave orders about colours for signal painting Guns, putting the provisions on board different vessels Secured the vessel which brought stores from Government (the Eleanor) which I had pointed out to Mr. Wallace-Employed running about to settle disputes, making calculations respecting those who wanted clothes-Dined with Mr. Tremaine, and in the evening tried my Sky Rockets Tank fires &c, and found them to answer very well, got the Poop Lanthorn fixed with its appendages The following Bill of Fare was submitted to the consideration of the Council and approved by them—

Bill of Fare

Daily Breakfast

4 oz Rice or 8 oz Indian meal with $\frac{1}{2}$ Gill of Molasses or $\frac{1}{2}$ oz Brown Sugar

Dinner

1 lb Salt Fish & 1 oz butter with 2 lbs Potatoes 4 day in the week 1 lb Beef or $\frac{3}{4}$ lb Pork with Pint $\frac{1}{2}$ Pease on Pork days & 1 lb Bread with Turnips on Beef Days-3 days in the week.

Supper

4 oz Rice or 8 oz Indian Meal with ½ Gill Molasses or [?4] oz Brown Sugar

The above a man's or woman's full allowance. Supposing a 1000 Blacks embark for Sierra Leone, and that 600 of them are 16 years of age & upwards and 400 under 16, the following provisions will be necessary for 12 weeks allowance, admitting that all those under 16 years of age, have only half the allowance of Grown men & women

- 1200 Bushels Potatoes 120 Bushels Rice
- 300 Bushels Turnips 22400 lb Indian Meal
- 45,000 lbs Bread 2100 Gallons Molasses
- 38000 lbs Fish 12,600 lbs Brown Sugar
- 2400 lbs Butter 600 Gallons Vinegar
- 9800 lbs Pork tea and wine for the sick
- 14,500 lbs Beef

DECEMBER 18

A MEXICAN BREAKFAST WITH BUFFALO BILL

1886: New York

An “almuerzo al Mejicano” was given by Buffalo Bill at the “genuine Mexican restaurant” he had opened just outside Madison-Square Garden on this day, at the rather odd time of early afternoon. The *New York Times* explained and described the event in a rather jingoistic tongue-in-cheek tone:

An “almuerzo” is a Mexican breakfast. Buffalo Bill is not a Mexican, but it is safe to assume that he is familiar with the customs and average bill of fare of the modern Aztecs.

It was decided by a sitting vote at yesterday's breakfast that Mexicans are modern Aztecs, but it is proper to state that such a resolution was only

adopted out of deference to Steele Mackaye, who seemed anxious to believe that the dishes set before him had been originated by the Montezumas or some other family which had been unfortunate enough to meet Cortez and his followers when they were athirst for gore and lucre. Charles Gaynor, who knows a thing or two about ballets, was also of the opinion that the flavor of the menu would be heightened were the company satisfied that the bill of fare was older than the diners. Buffalo bill said "Does the Aztec fable go?" Everybody said it did, and it did.

Then the "Puchero Mejicano" was brought on. If an American were to give it a name he would call it a chowder of anything but fish. It was followed by a "picadio con tortillas," which in English means hash, with flapjacks, "Picadio" is quite as mysterious as its American half-brother, but is much hotter. One plate of "picadio" calls for two quarts of ice water. "Tortillas" look enticing in type, any sort of tyoe; they do not look very bad on a plate, and, as a last resort, would no doubt save llife, but day in, day out, for a steady diet, a damp circus poster will run a "tortilla" a very close race. "Chileconcarne y frigolas" has an enticing sound. "Figolas" as readers of THE TIMES know, are black beans. "Chileconcarne" is a problem that can only be solved by the cook, but, apart from its torrid character, it is cheap at 25 cents a plate, and that is all it costs at the Mexican restaurant. It should be a favourite drink with American toppers, for it is a drink as well as meat, so far as its as its heating qualities are concerned.

A tidbit on the bill of fare were "Chiles pellenos," or pickled peppers, stuffed with raisins, almonds, and other condiments. One of these will hold its own for warmth against a five-dollar gas stove. "Henchilades" serve to remind one of the sort of grub the prodigal son subsisted on when he was in the hog business, though the corn husks merely answer as a covering to a thin coating of dough, which is filled with some inflammable material that calls for large draughts of iced claret. "Caperstada Mejicano" is a pudding. The waiter who attended to the wants of THE TIMES reporter said so, and he appeared to know more about it than anyone else in the vicinity. It hadn't a bad taste, either, but it is upon their chocolate that Mexicans prize themselves. The chocolate served at the breakfast was very grateful, but it raised blisters as it hunted for its level. Still, it was a soothing drink in comparison with "mescale," and the latter, in its turn, went down before "pulque." The breakfast was exceedingly entertaining: so was Mr. Cody, and everybody prophesied that the Mexican restaurant would soon be too

small to accommodate its patrons.

ENTERTAINING THE VENETIAN AMBASSADORS

1685: England

John Evelyn, the famous diarist wrote of a dinner given by King James II. The “banquet” he refers to was the name given to part of the feast that we would now call “dessert.”

I dind at the greate entertainment his Majestie gave the Venetian Ambassadors Signors Zenno & Justiniani, accompanied with 10 more Noble Venetians of their most illustrious families Cornaro, Maccenigo &c, who came to Congratulate their Majesties coming to the Crowne &c: The dinner was one of the most magnificent & plentifull that I have ever seene, at 4 severall Tables with Music, Trumpets, Kettle-drums which sounded upon a whistle at every health: The banquet was 12 vast Chargers pild up so high, as those who sat one against another could hardly see one another, of these Sweetemeates which doubtlesse were some dayes piling up in that exquisite manner, the Ambassadors touched not, but leaving them to the Spectators who came in Curiosity to see the dinner, &c were exceedingly pleas'd to see in what a moment of time, all that curious work was demolish'd, & the Comfitures &c voided & table clear'd: Thus his Majestie entertain'd them 3 dayes, which (for the table onely) cost him 600 pounds as the Cleark of the Greene-Cloth Sir W: Boreman assur'd me.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

2002

The International Rice Genome Sequencing Project (IRGSP) was established in 1997. It was comprised of fourteen organizations from ten countries with the goal of sequencing the entire genome *Oryza sativa* (ssp. Japonica)—one of the major types of rice grown worldwide. It was announced on December 18, 2002 in Japan that the genome had been successfully decoded, six years ahead of the original target date.

Rice is the staple food of two-thirds of the world's population. Genetic evidence suggests that the more than 40,000 varieties of rice now known originated from a

suggests that the more than 40,000 varieties of rice now known originated from a single source in the Pearl River valley region of southern China.

A SHOCKING DESSERT

1904: Norfolk, VA. Rum Sauce at Pastor's Feast

The Tide Water Ministerial Association (“composed of the leading Protestant ministers of Southeast Virginia”) held its annual dinner on this day, and the local Temperance ladies were not amused when they heard of one of the dishes. The scandal even made it to the *New York Times*, which reported as follows:

“Banana Fritters with Rum Sauce” served . . . has caused a sensation in church circles, and the reverend gentlemen have been upbraided by the members of their congregations, especially the women. It is expected at the meeting tomorrow of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union that the matter will be brought up for action.

Some of the ministers, in defence, say they were not aware of the rum sauce being on the bill of fare, while one preacher declared that no rum sauce was on the table, because he would have been able to smell it.

THE GREAT WHISKY RUSH

1916: Scotland

The *Guardian* newspaper reported on a terrible fear that gripped the city of Glasgow on this day.

Fear of prohibition: Glasgow’s great rush for whisky

. . . [T]he people of Glasgow manifested their belief that there will be prohibition by an extraordinary rush to obtain supplies of whisky. As soon as the premises of the wholesale and retail wine merchants were opened they were rushed by waiting queues, and large travelling hampers were used in which to take away numerous bottles.

The merchants state that the rush was unparalleled. Many shops were cleared of their stocks soon after midday. The rush for supplies is said to be

due to the Clyde shipbuilders' pronouncement that there must be prohibition if they are to execute the mercantile tonnage on hand.

PROHIBITION

1917: USA. Prohibition

The Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution was approved by Congress:

After one year from the ratification of this article the manufacture, sale, or transportation of intoxicating liquors within, the importation thereof into, or the exportation thereof from the United States and all territory subject to the jurisdiction thereof for beverage purposes is hereby prohibited.

On January 15, 1919, New Hampshire became the thirty-sixth state to ratify the amendment and thereby making it legal, to take effect one year from that date.

FOOD & WAR

1777: American Revolutionary War

From the diary of Albigenice Waldo, surgeon of Washington's at Valley Forge: "Universal Thanksgiving—a Roasted pig at Night. God be thanked for my health which I have pretty well recovered. How much better should I feel, were I assured my family were in health."

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1811: USA

Wilson Price Hunt: "From these Indians I bought a horse and a dog, and on the 18th I got another horse, some dried fish, a few roots, and some pounded dried cherries."

1844: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

The fine lagoons—which I called “Brown’s Lagoons” after their discoverer—and the good feed about them, induced me to stop for the purpose of killing the fat bullock which Mr. Isaacs had given us, and of drying it like the charqui of the South Americans; instead of waiting till Christmas, as we originally intended; especially as we were ignorant of the character of the country before us. Accordingly, on the 18th at five o’clock in the morning, it was slaughtered and cut into thin slices; which, before night, were nearly dried by the powerful heat of an almost vertical sun. We enjoyed ourselves very much on this occasion, and feasted luxuriously on fried liver at breakfast, on stuffed heart for luncheon, and on a fine steak and the kidneys for supper. Those who may have lived for so long a time as we had upon a reduced fare, will readily understand with what epicurean delight these meals were discussed.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1662: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

Up and to the office, Mr. Coventry and I alone sat till two o’clock, and then he inviting himself to my house to dinner, of which I was proud; but my dinner being a legg of mutton and two capons, they were not done enough, which did vex me; but we made shift to please him, I think; but I was, when he was gone, very angry with my wife and people.

1913: Italy

The writer D. H. Lawrence wrote to his friend W. E. Hopkins from Italy on this day: “We were at a peasant wedding the other day, and a great feast—octopus was one of the dishes: but I could not fancy it: I can eat snails all right, but octopus—no.”

DECEMBER 19

AN IDEAL CHRISTMAS DINNER

1915: USA

The *New York Times* of this day ran an article entitled “U.S. Expert Suggests Ideal Christmas Dinner”:

Would you serve your guests on Christmas Day with an “ideal dinner,” well balanced from beginning to end and guaranteed not to cause internal disorders, provided those present observe due moderation in the consumption of the meal? Then hearken to the advice of Miss Caroline L. Hunt of the Bureau of Home Economics of the Department of Agriculture, an expert on the science of cooking.

Miss Hunt’s ideal menu for Christmas, designed not only to satisfy the inner man—and woman—but also to avoid as far as possible the annoyance which invariably follow indulgence in foods which are deliberately unfriendly, consists of:

Oyster Soup. Crisp Crackers

Celery. Salted Almonds

Roast Stuffed Turkey.

Giblet Gravy Cranberry Jelly.

Mashed Potatoes. Turnips.

Onions in Cream.

Lettuce or Romaine Salad.

Plum Pudding or Mince Pie or Ice Cream

with Cakes

Nuts and Raisins. Crackers and Cheese.

Café Noir

FOOD & WAR

1939: Britain, World War II

From the wartime diary of housewife Nella Last:

There was very little bacon in town today and women were anxiously asking each other if they knew of a shop which had any in. We eat so little bacon and cheese, but I'll get my ration and start using it in place of other things—meat and fish—in my cooking. Fish is very dear and, in my budget, not worth the price for the nourishment. I've always been used to making "hotel" meals as the boys call them—soup, savoury and a sweet. If one is a good cook and manager, it's the cheapest way in the long run—cheaper than getting a big roast and chops and steaks for frying. In the last war, we were living tolerably well when many were complaining of dullness and shortness of food. Now, when I'm out two days and have to come home and make a hot lunch, my soup-casserole / omelet lunch is a real boon, for I can prepare it beforehand and it's no trouble to serve—a few minutes to set on the table.

CANDY FOR HEALTH

1998: Britain

An article in the British Medical Journal on this day reported the results of a five-year study performed by researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health, on candy consumption. The cohort studied was of nearly eight thousand men, and it was found that the mortality rate was lowest amongst men who ate candy three or more times a week compared with men who did not eat candy at all.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1873: Australia

Major Peter Warburton was on his private expedition to be the first to cross Australia from east to west. The men were suffering from scurvy and were close to starvation, and on this day the seventeenth and last camel was killed although it had little flesh on it. The head, feet, tail, and even the hide were made into soup.

I hope the new moon may bring us fine weather. We cannot jerk our meat without the sun, and we must kill it immediately, there not being a scrap of food in the camp. Shot a bird which looked like a pheasant, but unfortunately rather small. It cleared up at noon, so we killed, skinned, and cut up our last camel. Heavy-feeding all evening; fine night.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1785: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde:

The Captain and myself took a ride to Norwich . . . put up our Horses at the Kings Head and there dined at the Ordinary on a fine piece of boiled Beef and a Saddle of Mutton &c. . . . I then returned to the Kings Head and there supped and slept. Supper being just going in for the Family I joined them, and there met with the best Supper I ever met with at an Inn.—Hashed Fowl, Veal Collops, a fine Woodcock, a Couple of Whistling Plovers, a real Teal of the small kind and hot Apple Pye.

1846: Italy

The poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning was in Pisa, and wrote to her sister on this day:

Will you take us in some day, Henrietta, and “include the cooking and housekeeping”? and “see us properly done for”? Robert and I are just alike in every fancy about those kind of things, he turns away from beef and mutton, and loathes the idea of a Saturday hash! A little chicken and plenty of cayenne, and above all things pudding, will satisfy us both when most we are satisfied; and to order just what is wanted, from the “traiteur”, apart from economical considerations of what is “in the house”, and should be eaten, is our “ideal” in this way. My appetite is certainly improved. I finish one egg, for instance, in the morning. Then at dinner we have Chianti which is an excellent kind of claret; and fancy me (and Wilson) drinking claret out of tumblers! . . . A few days ago, our lady of the house sent me a gift of an enormous dish of oranges—for the “Signora”—great oranges just gathered from her own garden—two hanging on a stalk, and the green leaves glittering around them—twelve or thirteen great oranges they were, and

excellent oranges. We have on every day after dinner, and the sight of the green crowding orange leaves is very pretty, and keeps us from thinking too much of the cold.

DECEMBER 20

THE POISON SQUAD

1902: USA

The famous (or infamous) “Poison Squad” studies began on this day, under the direction of Harvey Wiley, chief of the Bureau of Chemistry. Public concern over the use of preservatives in food had been increasing for years, and it was a particular interest of Wiley’s. He had lobbied Congress in 1899 for funding for some “Hygienic Table Trials” (“hygiene” in this context at this time referred to healthy food, not cleanliness.) In 1902 Congress appropriated funds for an investigation into “whether preservatives should ever be used or not, and if so, what preservatives and in what quantities.”

The study ran for five years. At any one time the squad consisted of twelve healthy young male volunteers from the Department of Agriculture. It was said that there was never a shortage of volunteers, who quickly adopted the motto “Only the Brave Dare Eat the Fare.” The first five preservatives tested were borax, salicylic acid, sulfuric acid, sodium benzoate, and formaldehyde, in dosages ranging from one-half gram daily to four gram. Initially the chemical was added directly to the food, but the taste often gave it away, and the volunteers then tended to avoid that particular food. The substance being tested was then given in the form of a capsule taken mid-meal.

The squad pledged to eat all their meals, snacks, and beverages at the “hygienic table.” Everything ingested and excreted was measured and reported, and the men received a thorough medical check each week. The trials were a crucial step in the enacting of the Pure Food and Drugs Act of 1906.

Chorus from *Song of the Poison Squad* October 1903

O, they may get over it but they’ll never look the same,

That kind of bill of fare would drive most men insane.

Next week he'll give them mothballs, a la Newburgh or else plain,
O, they may get over it but they'll never look the same.

POSSUM CLUB BANQUET

1900: Detroit, Michigan

The menu for the Possum Club Banquet held at Griswold House on this night was:

BLUE POINTS

Celery *Manhattan*

-

MULLIGATAWNEY SOUP

Olives Radishes Young Onions

-

ROAST STUFFED 'POSSUM, Southern Style

Sweet Potatoes Kentucky Hoe Cake *Claret*

-

COLD HAM

COLD TURKEY COLD TONGUE

-

Chicken Salad Potato Salad

-

DRINKS

BOYS

CHEESE CRACKERS

COFFEE *Cigars*

FOOD & WAR

1899: South Africa, Boer War

From *The Diary of a Doctor's Wife during the Siege of Kimberley*, by Winifred Heberden:

We were fired on at a distance of 2,000 yards. . . . Our guns replied in their turn ..When the men lie down to fire their rifles, the dogs lie down, too. In the course of the ride out several hares got up which the dogs and a few of the men were unable to resist, and some good sport was seen. A small bag which, nevertheless, must have been a welcome addition to the siege soup at the Trooper's Mess.

Owing to the struggle for meat every morning, orders have been issued that no person is to be served before 8 a.m. Only about four butcher's shops keep open for the sale of meat, so often the struggle is terrible, and as the best parts are put on one side for the Hospital, the Camp, and the Hotels, housekeepers come badly off at the end of the struggle, and often go away day after day without getting any at all. Tea and coffee are running short, these and breadstuffs, as well as meat are now controlled by the Military. Whiskey and cigarettes are nearly finished; whilst tinned milk has for some time been only obtainable through a doctor's certificate—and that at the rate of one tin only for each permit.

FISH & CHIPS

1928: Britain

Harry Ramsden started his fish and chip restaurant in a hut In White Cross, Guiseley near Bradford in West Yorkshire. It became the most famous fish and chip shop in the world.

Three years after opening, Ramsden moved into new, much larger, premises next door to the original hut. This venue is listed in the *Guinness Book of Records* as the largest fish and chip shop in the world, seating 250 customers.

The Ramsden fish and chip shop is Britain's longest established restaurant chain, with 35 owned and franchised outlets currently operating in Britain.

FOOD & SHIPS

1853

The vessel *Sir Edward Parry* left Plymouth on this day with emigrants bound for South Australia. It arrived in Adelaide on 26th March, 1854. The victualing standards of the time for emigrant ships chartered by Her Majesty's Colonial Land and Emigration Commissioners emigrant ships were encapsulated in the *Tender for Passage Accommodation and Diet of Persons*. For passengers over the age of 14 years these were:

- Saturdays: 8 oz. Beef
- Monday, Wednesday and Friday: 6 oz. pork
- Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday: 8 oz preserved meat.
- Every day: 8oz. of "biscuit", 6 oz. flour, 3 oz. oatmeal, and 3 Quarts of water.
- Alternate days: 2 oz. raisins, 1½ oz. suet, a quarter pint of peas, and ¼ oz of tea.
- Coffee (½ oz.), sugar (4 oz.), and treacle (2 oz): allocated three and four times per week respectively.
- Rice was given Wednesdays and Saturdays and preserved potatoes, on Sundays and Thursdays.
- Butter was given on Tuesdays and Fridays

Passengers were also entitled to one gill of mixed pickles, half an ounce of mustard, salt (2 oz.) and pepper (half an ounce) each week. Most also took some

supplies of their own to supplement these very basic allowances.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1663: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

Lords day. After a dull sermon of the Scotchman, home; and there I find my brother Tom and my two Cosens Scotts, he and she—the first time they were ever here, And by and by in comes my uncle Wight and Mr. Norbury, and they sat with us a while drinking of wine, of which I did give them plenty. But they two would not stay to supper, but the other two did; and we were as merry as I should be with people that I do wish well to but know not what discourse either to give them or find from them. We showed them our house from top to bottom, and had a good turkey roasted for our supper, and store of wine. And after supper sent them home on foot; and so we to prayers and to bed.

PRISON FOOD

2002: USA

Fairfax County (Virginia) Sheriff Stan Barry ate prison fare at a news conference on this day. The stunt had been staged to demonstrate the edibility (not, perhaps the palatability) of the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center's only vegetarian meal option—a vegetable loaf described by some as “an oily brown brick.” Afterwards he was honest enough to say “I knew there were going to be a lot of things I had to do in this job that wouldn't be enjoyable . . . eating The Loaf in front of witnesses wasn't one of them.”

The background to the stunt was the incarceration for a juvenile, John Lee Malvo, on suspicion of being involved in multiple shootings. Malvo claimed that the vegetable loaf was the only dish on the menu which was acceptable to him as a Muslim, and consequently he had been eating it three times a day since November 19. Malvo's court appointed guardian had formally notified prison authorities a few days before the Sheriff's news conference that he was suffering “adverse physical reactions” (gastro-intestinal symptoms) as a result of eating the loaf for every meal. The prison authorities' response was that other Muslim

the loaf for every meal. The prison authorities' response was that other Muslim prisoners were accepting of the regulation pork-free menu, and that special vegetarian meals would not be prepared for Malvo on account of humanitarian preference.

Ironically, the loaf was usually used as a disciplinary tool against prisoners who had committed offences such as assault within the prison.

The Fairfax County, Va., Adult Detention Center's recipe for The Loaf

- 120 slices of wheat bread
- 25 cups grated nondairy cheese
- 10 cups raisins
- 4 cups vegetable oil
- 15 cups grated carrots
- 15 cups well-drained spinach
- 60 cups vegetarian beans
- 8 cups tomato puree
- 15 cups nondairy powdered milk
- 12 cups instant potatoes
- 1 pound brown sugar
- 1 cup white sugar

1. Mix.

2. Bake at 325 degrees for 40 minutes.

- Makes 60 servings.

DECEMBER 21

THOMASING AND DOLING

Britain

This is the feast day of Saint Thomas the Apostle, called “Doubting Thomas.” In Britain the day is strongly associated with onions.

The eve of St. Thomas was one of a number of nights for divination. A popular ritual was for young women to peel a “St. Thomas Onion” and put it under the pillow, hoping that with the appropriate prayer, they would dream that night of their future husband. A more determined form of the ritual was for the young woman to cut the onion into four, whispering over the segments the name of the one they hoped or expected to propose.

The most widespread tradition is that of giving to the poor on this day. “Thomasing” or “doleing” was the begging of wheat for Christmas frumenty or flour for Christmas bread. Many parishes and individuals made gifts or bequests for this day, including Parson James Woodforde of Norfolk, who appears in a number of places in this book. A couple of entries from his diary on this day are:

1795: This being St. Thomas’s Day, I gave to 52. poor People of my Parish, against Christmas, 6d each. . . . Dinner to day, boiled Beef & a Rabbit roasted &c.

1796: This being St. Thomas’s Day, I gave to the Poor of Weston at 6d. apiece. . . . Dinner to day, Hash-Mutton & a Rabbit roasted &c.

There are traditions elsewhere in Europe on St. Thomas’s Day. In Westphalia, there is *the Rittburgische Hochzeit* (Rittburg wedding)—an opulent meal served in the belief that if you eat well on this day you will eat well all year. In Bavaria it was the day to slaughter the “St Thomas Pig”—a specially fattened animal to be prepared for Christmas dinner.

EMBALMED BEEF

1898: USA

The United States Army beef scandal erupted over the quality of meat provided to U.S. soldiers fighting in the Spanish-American War. It seems certain that much of the meat provided was poor in quality, but the exact nature and severity of the problem was disputed. During the investigation, Commanding General Nelson A. Miles made reference to “embalmed beef” and the phrase became indelibly attached to the scandal, even though it seems likely that the major problem was not chemically-preserved meat or refrigerated meat but poor quality canned meat.

During the enquiry, on December 21, General Miles said:

You asked about food. In my judgement that was one of the serious causes of so much sickness and distress on the part of the troops. . . . There is some serious defect in that refrigerator beef, and also the canned beef that was furnished. There was sent to Porto Rico 337 tons of what is known as, or called, refrigerated beef, which you might call embalmed beef, and there was also sent 198,508 pounds of what is known as canned fresh beef, which was condemned, as far as I know, by nearly every officer whose command used it.

Miles also tendered a letter from army medical officer William H. Daly in which he said:

Much of the beef I examined arriving on the transports from the United States . . . [was] apparently preserved by injected chemicals to aid deficient refrigeration. . . . It looked well, but had an odor similar to that of a dead human body after being injected with formaldehyde, and it tasted when first cooked like decomposed boric acid.

The Commissary General’s response was that experiments were being conducted on meat preservation, and some of the experimentally preserved beef was taken on board a transport bound for Puerto Rico, but that none of this preserved meat was ever issued as rations. It was felt that this “beef test” was probably at the bottom of all the talk of embalmed beef.

The issue was confused by other claims about the quality of the meat. Major General Nelson A. Miles said that he had evidence that certain “canned roast beef” supplied to the soldiers was nothing more than the pulp left after making extract of beef.

SCHOOL MEALS

1906: Britain

An “[a]ct to make provision for Meals for Children attending Public Elementary Schools in England and Wales was passed by the British Parliament on this day.” The act had been the project of Bradford Labour MP, Fred Jowett, who made the issue of school meals the topic of his maiden speech.

There was concern on the part of a number of authorities about the poor nutrition of children in industrial areas, many of whom arrived at school without having had breakfast. This act permitted local authorities to provide school meals, with the cost to be recovered from parents.

Local authorities did not respond wholeheartedly in many areas however, as it was difficult to recoup the cost. By 1939 less than 50 percent of regions were providing the service.

FOOD & WAR

1777: American Revolutionary War

From the diary of Albigeance Waldo, surgeon of Washington’s at Valley Forge:

Preparations are made for huts. Provisions Scarce. Mr. Ellis went homeward—sent a Letter to my Wife. Heartily wish myself at home, my Skin and eyes are almost spoil’d with continual smoke. A general cry thro’ the Camp this Evening among the Soldiers, “No Meat! No Meat!”—the Distant vales Echo’d back the melancholy sound—“No Meat! No Meat!” Immitating the noise of Crows and Owls, also, made a part of confused Musick.

What have you for your dinner boys? “Nothing but Fire Cake and Water, Sir.” At night, “Gentlemen the Supper is ready.” What is your Supper Lads? “Fire Cake and Water, Sir.” Very poor beef has been drawn in our Camp the greater part of this season. A Butcher bringing a Quarter of this kind of Beef into Camp one day who had white Buttons on the knees of his breeches, a Soldier cries out—“There, there Tom is some more of your fat Beef. hv mv soul I can see the Butcher’s breeches buttons through it ”

...see, by my seat I can see the Dutchmen's breeches buttons through it.

Fire cakes were the most basic form of bread, the staple of soldiers, explorers, and campers everywhere. They are made by making a simple dough of flour and water and baking lumps or discs of it over the coals on any surface available—a griddle, a hoe, a shovel, or a flat rock.

1915: USA, World War I, Commission for Relief in Belgium

Herbert Hoover wrote to Lord Eustace Percy of the British Foreign Office on this day. He reviewed the status of the relief operation in Belgium and included a memorandum of estimated food requirements.

My Dear Lord Eustace, The following shows approximately the imports desired by our friends in Belgium:

Wheat.—The available native wheat supply, which is under our control, affords us about 13,500 tons of wheat per month. It is therefore necessary for us to import about 54,000 tons per month, in order to give a 250 gram flour ration to the population. Owing to the lateness of the harvest all over the world, our stocks in Belgium have run down until we have, aside from stuff in transit, today only an average of two days' supply in our warehouses in Belgium, and it is therefore necessary for us to build up some stocks in the country, which implies larger importations in the immediate future, with, of course, a slackening off towards the end.

Lard.—In order to enable us to give a ration of 33 grams (1 oz.) per diem, it will be necessary to import 7,000 tons of lard per month into Belgium.

Bacon.—In order to give a ration of 16 1/2 grams (1/2 oz.) of bacon per diem to Belgium, it will be necessary to import 3,500 tons per month.

Maize.—Maize is used partly for human food, in the form of a porridge product called cerealine, designed for children, while the refuse and the rest of the maize is used for fodder.

Rice.—We have, during recent months, been importing about 5,000 tons of rice per month for Belgian account. It is issued as a ration but is participated in only by the more indigent portion of the population and it has not covered the whole of the people as a ration of 60 grams of rice per diem would require a larger quantity than this.

them would require a larger quantity than this.

Beans, peas, and lentils.—Our requirements are about 4,000 tons a month. The demand varies with the season. During the summer we do not require the whole of our imports. These are in stock and are now coming into use again and we shall need to resume imports on this scale at an early date.

Condensed milk.—We shall need to be prepared to import during the winter, perhaps 1,000 tons of condensed milk per month for Belgian account. It is used chiefly for the support of the children and is made an eminent necessity by the natural shortage of fresh fodder during the winter.

Yeast materials.—We used to import a certain amount of barley, rye, and malt radicles for yeast making. This amounts to probably 1,000 tons of stuff per month.

Preserved and frozen meat.—The various Belgian communities are clamoring for the importation of beef products, and this amounts to, presumably, a total of 1,000 or 1,500 tons per month of each material.

Cocoa.—This item probably amounts to 1,000 tons of cocoa or cocoa beans per month for the manufacture of chocolate.

Coffee.—The Belgians are anxious to secure the importation of at least 2,000 tons of coffee per month, the depletion of stocks in Belgium making this imperative.

Sugar.—There appears to be available about 5,000 tons of sugar per month to the Belgian population from native production, against a normal consumption of about 10,000 tons a month. Many quarters of the country are already short of sugar and the Belgians are anxious to import at least 2,000 tons a month.

Soap.—The exhaustion of oil materials in Belgium makes the local manufacture of soap inadequate and the Belgians are anxious to import at least 1,000 tons of soap per month for their account.

Oleomargarine materials.—We have prepared a factory for handling imported components for Oleomargarine, and something like 1,000 tons per month are wanted to stem the butter famine.

Butter.—The Belgians wish us to import butter, in what amount we cannot estimate, probably not exceeding 500 tons per month.

Preserved fish.—The Belgians wish us to make arrangements to import dried herrings, tinned salmon, and other forms of fish. I do not know how much this would run into and amount to, but I suppose, say, 300 or 400 tons.

Dried fruit and vegetables.—Under this item is the ordinary form of dried fruit-raisins, prunes, apples, *etc.*

Comestible oils.—This item is for salad oil and is made up of either pure olive oil or with peanut and cottonseed substitutes, and the Belgian requirements seem to run into 400 tons a month, as a minimum.

Salt and groceries generally.—You will recollect that under the “Produits Divers” arrangement we had the right to import various articles comprised under these heads, including tea.

Potatoes.—There are apparently ample potatoes in Belgium, but they cannot be obtained from the peasants in view of expected famine prices. If we could import 10,000 tons per month for a while we would smash the market.

Cheese.—The Belgians wish to import up to 2,000 tons per month from Holland.

1942: Canada, World War II

Butter became rationed, although the allowance of half a pound of butter per person, per week was generous by wartime standards elsewhere. The order was to ensure fair distribution of butter and limit hoarding.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1661: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

—

'To White Hall to the Privy Seal, where my Lord Privy Seal did tell us he could seal no more this month, for that he goes thirty miles out of town to keep his Christmas. At which I was glad, but only afeard lest any thing of the King's should force us to go after him to get a seal in the country. Thence to Westminster Hall (having by the way drank with Mrs. Sarah and Mrs. Betty at my Lord's lodgings), and thence taken by some Exchequer men to the Dogg, where, being St. Thomas's day, by custom they have a general meeting at dinner.

1665: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

At noon all of us dined at Capt. Cockes at a good chine of beef and other good meat, but being frost-bitten, was most of it unroast; but very merry and a good dish of fowl we dressed ourselves. . . . Coming home and going to bed, the boy tells me his sister Daniel hath provided my a supper of little birds, killed by her husband; and I made her sup with me.

1762: England

The lovelorn James Boswell (Samuel Johnson's biographer) had lent some money to "Louisa," his love of the moment, and wrote in his journal:

I had resolved not to dine with my landlord, nor to see them much this week, in order to recover my proper dignity and distance. Another very good reason now glared me strong in the face. By my letting Louisa have two guineas, I had only thirteen shillings left; and my term of payment, as I have 25 £ every six weeks, was not till the 7 of January. I therefore could not afford a shilling, nor near so much, for dinner. So that I was put to my shifts, as I would not be indebted for dinner nor go and ask my allowance before it was due. I sat in till between four and five. I then went to Holborn, to a cheesemonger's, and bought a piece of 3 lb. 10 oz., which cost me 14 1/2d. I eat part of it in the shop, with a halfpenny roll, two of which I had bought at a baker's. I then carried home my provision, and eat some more cheese with the other roll, and a halfpennyworth of apples by way of relish, and took a drink of water.

DECEMBER 22

FOREFATHERS' DAY WITH MARK TWAIN

1881: Philadelphia

Forefathers' Day commemorates the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers at Plymouth. The actual day in 1620 was December 21, but because of an error in converting from the Old Style to the New Style calendar, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries it was commonly celebrated on December 22.

The First Annual Festival of the recently formed New England Society of Pennsylvania was held in the main dining-room of the Continental Hotel on December 22, 1881. The *Philadelphia Press* reported:

Never was there seen a more solid and respectable gathering of business men, leaders of the bench and bar, newspaper editors and proprietors, clergymen and college professors, all gathered to do honor to their native section of country. . . . Mark Twain stood in one corner uttering drolleries which caused his auditors to guffaw in a manner highly reprehensible in staid and sober citizens.

Beside each plate lay a toast list, printed on hand-made paper of the style of two centuries ago. There was also a menu of the most artistic and original design. It was printed in chocolate-colored ink, and bore on the first page a representation of the Mayflower making her perilous voyage, with the Pilgrim Fathers on board. On the last page was a portrait of John Alden's Priscilla, one of whose descendants was present at the festival. The bill of fare was printed in antique type, and was as follows:

THE FIRST ANNUAL FESTIVAL

-OF—

THE NEW ENGLAND SOCIETY

-OF—

PENNSILVANIA,

Thursday Evening, December 22, 1881.

YE LISTE OF DISHES FOR YE FESTIVAL.

Oysters from Chasepack Bay in their Shells.

Green Turtle Soupe.

Boyled Salmon with Sauce of Shrimps.

Cucumbers.

*Pates a la Reine.

Fillet of Beef Garnyshed with Mushrooms.

Roaste Turkey from Cape Cod, with Cranberries.

Potatoes. Strynge Beans. Pease.

Pork and Beans. Stewed Terrapin.

1620–1881

Sherbot. Cigarettes.

Canvas-back Duck. Partridge.

Lettuce Salading Dressed in Oyle.

Puddings with Plumbs.

Mince Pie. Pumpkin Pie.

Frozen Sweete Thynges, also Jellies and Cakes.

Several Sorts of Nuts and Fruits.

Coffee.

*Lyttle Pies such as the Queen of France doth love.

RULES FOR BUTCHERS

1589: France

According to the *Larousse Gastronomique* (1961), Letters Patent granted on this day reinstated the Butchers' Guild (which had been in disarray for some time), and set down regulations as to their practice. Under these orders, butchers were forbidden to:

1. Sell outside their stall.
2. Open new stalls, move their stalls without authority, or reduce the number of stalls they possessed.
3. Keep open after 6 pm except on holidays and Saturdays when the could remain open until 10 pm.
4. Open on holidays and Sundays except from Trinity Sunday to September 8 because of hot weather, but never on Ascension Day.
5. Exhibit meat on Abstinence Days or during Lent in more than one stall out of ten, and this only for the sick.
6. Solicit custom or abuse the customers.
7. Slaughter animals without informing the police and without paying for this right.
8. Cook meat, or sell cooked meat.
9. Run an inn, a fruit shop, a public-house, or pursue any trade other than that of butcher.

FOOD & WAR

1777: American Revolutionary War

George Washington wrote to Congress about the shortages of essential supplies to the troops at Valley Forge:

I do not know from what cause, this alarming deficiency or rather total failure of supplies arises; But unless more vigorous exertions and better regulations take place in that line, and immediately, this army must dissolve. . . . Three days successively we have been destitute of bread . . . two days we have been entirely without meat. It is not to be had from the commissaries. Whenever we procure beef, it is of such a vile quality, as to render it a poor [substitute] for food. The men must be supplied, or they cannot be commanded.

I am &c. George Washington

Head Quarters, Valley Forge

1777: American Revolutionary War

From the diary of Albigeance Waldo, surgeon of Washington's at Valley Forge:

Our Division are under Marching Orders this morning. I am ashamed to say it, but I am tempted to steal Fowls if I could find them, or even a whole Hog, for I feel as if I could eat one. But the Impoverish'd Country about us, affords but little matter to employ a Thief, or keep a Clever Fellow in good humour. But why do I talk of hunger and hard usage, when so many in the World have not even fire Cake and Water to eat. . .

It is not in the power of Philosophy . . . to convince a man he may be happy and Contented if he will, with a Hungry Belly. Give me Food, Cloaths, Wife and Children, kind Heaven! and I'll be as contented as my Nature will permit me to be.

This Evening a Party with two field pieces were order'd out. At 12 of the Clock at Night, Providence sent us a little Mutton, with which we immediately had some Broth made, and a fine Stomach for same. Ye who Eat Pumkin Pie and Roast Turkies, and yet Curse fortune for using you ill, Curse her no more, least she reduce you Allowance of her favours to a bit of Fire Cake, and a draught of Cold Water, and in Cold Weather too.

FOOD FACTS QUIZ

1941: Britain, World War II

The Ministry of Food's *Food Facts* leaflet published on this day in *The Times* contained a quiz, just in time for some Christmas fun. The correct answers were published upside down in the newspaper.

Food Facts Quiz

Here is a handful of nuts for you to crack around the fire at Christmas. "Chestnuts" they *should* be—to those of you who listen to the Kitchen Front Broadcasts or read Food Facts. Each correct answer is worth a certain number of points. A score of 20 out of 25 is good; but anyone who scores less than 10 should be made to do the washing up!

1. 1 (a) Why is it an advantage to cook green vegetables quickly? (*one point*) (b) How do you prepare them for quick cooking? (*one point*)
2. Should young children be given cheese? (*one point*)
3. Who drew the figure at the top of this advertisement? (*one point*)
4. How long must a fruiterer keep oranges for the holder of a child's ration book? (*one point*)
5. (a) How much is fresh-salted cod per lb.? (*one point*) (b) Who prepares it for cooking, and how? (*two points*). (c) When should it be cooked (*one point*).
6. (a) What are the present values of Points Coupons A, B, and C? (*three points*). (b) Between what dates are the current coupons valid? (*two points*)
7. Which is the correct way of mixing Milk Powder? (a) Do you pour the water on to the powder (b) Sprinkle the powder into the water? (*one point*)
8. 8.(a) What is the time of the Kitchen Front Broadcast? (*one point*) (b) Which four of the following have taken part in these broadcasts? Raymond Gram Swing, Jack Hylton, Quentin Reynolds, Vic Oliver, Howard Marshall, Mabel Constanduros, George Allison, Goss

Custard, Bernard Shaw (*four points*).

9. Each of the following foods is famous for a particular Vitamin. State whether A, B, C, or D:—National Wheatmeal; Carrots; Cod Liver Oil; Brussels Sprouts (*four points*).
10. What is (or are) Rose Hips? A dress design, An authoress, An Eastern Dance; Pods of the wild rose, rich in Vitamin C (*one point*).

Answers:

1. (a) To preserve the vitamins. (b) Shred them.
2. Certainly. Preferably grated and not cooked.
3. Walt Disney.
4. Five days (it used to be seven)
5. (a) 9d. a lb. (Smoked varieties 1/1d. to 1/3d.) (b) The fishmonger. He desalts it by soaking it in water for 48 hours. (c) The same day it is desalted.
6. (a) A and B equal 1 point each. C equals 2 points. (b) December 14th to January 12th .
7. (b)
8. (a) 8.15 a.m. (b) Quentin Reynolds, Vic Oliver, Mabel Constanduros, George Allison.
9. Carrot, A; National Wheatmeal, B; Sprouts, C; Cod Liver Oil, D.
10. Pods of the Wild Rose.

CHEESE FOR THE POOR

1981: USA

Acting president Reagan authorized the distribution of 30 million pounds of

surplus cheese to the poor. The cheese was held in Federal Storage, and according to an official, had reached “critical inventory situation.” The cheese in this category represented more than two pounds of cheese for every person in the United States, and although it was valued at \$43 million, it represented only five percent of the total stockpile.

The cheese was to be made available on request by the states, for distribution via private agencies, and Reagan hinted at release of further supplies: “More distributions may be necessary as we continue our drive to root out waste in government and make the best possible use of our nation’s resources.”

A DARING DINNER

1997: Carfraemill, Scotland

A number of diners sat down to dinner at the Lodge Hotel on this night, in complete disregard for the law, and, some would say, at great risk of their health. On the menu was “ye Roast Beef of Olde Scotland,” which was in breach of the newly enacted Beef Bones Regulations 1997, which had come into force on December 16, and which stated that beef was not to be roasted on the bone. The legislation was the result of the “Mad Cow” disease scare.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1953: USA

Richard C. Laramie, of Joliet, Illinois, was granted Patent No. 2,663,157 for a “Portable Ice Chest for Storing Foods and the Like.” This was the first patent issued for such an item.

It is an object of my invention to provide a portable ice chest for storing and refrigerating foods and the like, in which a food-supporting platform may be shifted into a number of selectable positions and which is provided with a hinged partition member connected at one end thereof which is adapted to be swung into various positions and provide a multi-function food storage compartment which is adapted to simultaneously provide not only a wet storage chamber but also a dry storage chamber, and which may be converted to provide a deep, dry storage chamber with a divided ice compartment

companion.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1661: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys: “Lords day. To church in the morning. . . . Home to dinner; and there I took occasion, from the blackness of the meat as it came out of the pot, to fall out with my wife and the maids for their sluttery.”

1818: Italy

The poet Percy Bysshe Shelley was in Naples. He was clearly not a fan of garlic.

There are two Italies. . . . The one is the most sublime and lovely contemplation that can be conceived by the imagination of man’ the other is the most degraded, disgusting and odious. What do you think? Young women of rank actually eat—you will never guess what—garlick ! our poor friend Lord Byron is quite corrupted living among these people, and in fact is going on in a way not worthy of him.

DECEMBER 23

ST THORLAK’S DAY

Iceland

Thorlak was an Icelandic monk and bishop of Skaholt, and is the patron saint of Iceland. It is traditional on this day to eat a dish of fermented skate. The smell of fermented skate is unpleasantly overpowering to many non-Icelanders, but aficionados say it tastes better than it smells. Another traditional dish of the day is smoked lamb, and the skate may be cooked in the broth in which the lamb was simmered. It is served with melted sheep’s fat with cracklings, and potatoes, washed down with caraway-flavored schnapps.

STARGAZY PIE DAY

Cornwall, England

In the small coastal village of Mousehole, it is traditional to serve “Stargazy Pie” on this night. The pie is made from pilchards, and the characteristic feature is that the heads of the fish poke through the crust. It is said to be made in memory of a semi-mythical fisherman (sometimes called Tom Bawcock) who saved the struggling, hungry townsfolk in the middle of a bad fishing season, when he went out in very severe weather and managed to return with a boatload of fish.

NO PIES FOR THE KING

1648: England

Charles I arrived at Carisbrooke Castle on the Isle of Wight on this day, as a prisoner of Cromwell. The castle was the headquarters of the Parliamentary Army, and the King to be lodged “in the upper castle in some of the safest rooms.” It seems that the king retained his dignity in spite of his status. It was reported in *Perfect Occurrences* a few days later that “[t]he King, though the cook disappointed him of mince pies and plum porridge, yet he resolved to keep Christmas; and accordingly put on his best clothes, and himself is chaplain to the gentlemen that attend him reading and expounding the scriptures to them . . . he was pretty merry.”

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1564: West Indies

Admiral Sir John Hawkins was on his second voyage, and by this day was in the West Indies. One of the men who accompanied Hawkins was John Sparke, who described meeting “the Indians” on this day, shortly after their arrival in Santa Fé. His journal makes early mention of the sweet potato.

[C]ertain Indians . . . came down to us, presenting mill [meal] and cakes of bread which they had made of a kind of corn called maize, in bigness of a pease, the ear whereof is much like to a teasel, but a span in length, having thereon a number of grains. Also they brought down to us hens, potatoes and pies, which we bought for beads, pewter whistles, glasses, knives and other trifles. These potatoes be the most delicate roots that may be eaten;

and do far exceed our parsnips or carrots. Their pines be of the bigness of two fists, the outside whereof is of the making of a pine apple, but it is soft like the rind of a cucumber; and the inside eateth like an apple, but it is more delicious than any sweet apple sugared.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1661: London, England

From the Diary of Samuel Pepys: “[B]y water to the Treasury Office, where I find Sir W. Penn paying off the Sophia and Griffen and there I stayed with him till noon; and having sent for some Coller (collar) of beef and a minced-pie, we eat and drank, and so I left him there.”

1778: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde. He has some guests for dinner, and the day is a success, in spite of the ham being eaten out by maggots.

I gave them for dinner 3 Fowls boiled, part of a Ham, the major part of which Ham was entirely eat out by the flies getting into it, a tongue boiled, a Leg of Mutton rosted, and an excellent currant Pudding. I gave them for Supper a couple of Rabbits smothered in onions, some Hash Mutton and some rosted Potatoes. We were exceedingly merry indeed all the night.

DECEMBER 24

THE EGGNOG RIOT

1826: USA

When the cadets in North Barrack No. 5 at West Point Military Academy were informed that there would be no alcohol for their Christmas eggnog, they smuggled in some whisky. In the way of such occasions, the celebrations became noisy and increasingly out of control; items got broken and a shot was fired. By early Christmas morning, seventy cadets were in serious trouble with military authorities. Nineteen of them (plus one enlisted man) were court-martialed, six resigned, and many were confined to barracks for a time.

...and, on being, and many were carried to gardens for a time.

FOOD LAW

1970: USA

The Plant Variety Protection Act (an Intellectual Property Act) authorized protection for certain sexually reproduced and tuber-propagated plants. The earlier Plant Patent Protection Act of 1930 applied to asexually reproduced plants.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1770: Britain

A patent for an improved smoke-jack was issued to Peter Clare. A jack is a device for turning a roasting spit in front of an open fire. They were turned by various mechanisms—kitchen boys, dogs running in a wheel, a wound-up spring as in a clock—and by hot air or smoke rising up the chimney.

It is not known when or by whom the smoke-jack was invented, but two of the diarists who feature in this book make mention of them.

On October 23, 1660, Samuel Pepys notes “After supper we looked over . . . his Wooden Jack in his Chimny that go with the Smoak; which indeed is very pretty.”

And John Evelyn mentioned in his diary in 1676:

The Smoke-Jack in my Brother’s Kitchen-Chimney; which has been there, I have heard, near a hundred Years, and has seldom stood still from its first setting up, Night or Day; it makes very little Noise, needs no Winding up, and for that, preferable to the more noisy inventions.

FOOD FOR THE POOR

1880: London, England

The poor poured in to receive their Christmas dinner from one of the city's soup kitchens. The *London Truth* reported:

From 3 o'clock to 10 on Christmas Eve, a continuous stream of people poured through the Narrow passage leading from Windmill-street, Leicester Square, through Ham-Yard, to the Soup Kitchen established there in 1846 by the late Mr. Charles Cochrane. They came empty-handed, and went away with their Christmas dinner in their arms, in the shape of four pounds of beef for roasting, three pounds of plum pudding, a loaf, tea, sugar, biscuits, ale, and in some special cases, a little spirits or wine for the aged and the invalids.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1769: Manawa Islands

From the *Endeavour* Journal of Joseph Banks:

“*Island of 3 Kings*”; “*of Cape Maria Van Diemen*” . . . myself in a boat shooting in which I had good success, killing chiefly several Gannets or Solan Geese so like European ones that they are hardly distinguishable from them. As it was the humour of the ship to keep Christmas in the old fashioned way it was resolv'd of them to make a Goose pye for tomorrows dinner.

1832: South Africa

From the Journal of Syms Covington, assistant to Charles Darwin on the voyage of the *Beagle*:

[M]oored ship in Wigwam Cove [Cape Horn]. Here we passed our Christmas and I may say a merry one considering where we were and in a ship. The Captain indulged the ships company in every thing he possibly could. . . . We found wild fowl on the Cape and on other small islands in its vicinity, and likewise found a sort of grouse. Here are plenty of celery, black currants and berries, the latter in immense numbers, and good eating.

1912: Antarctica

From the diary of Robert Falcon Scott:

I must write a word of our supper last night. We had four courses. The first, pemmican, full whack, with slices of horse meat flavoured with onion and curry powder and thickened with biscuit; then an arrowroot, cocoa and biscuit hoosh sweetened; then a plum-pudding; then cocoa with raisins, and finally a dessert of caramels and ginger. After the feast it was difficult to move. Wilson and I couldn't finish our share of plum-pudding. We have all slept splendidly and feel thoroughly warm -such is the effect of full feeding.

DECEMBER 25

CHRISTMAS DAY

The European tradition is to begin the Christmas celebration in the early hours of December 25, after midnight mass.

Réveillon, this word says it all; it is just as well that it comes only once a year, on 25 December, between two and three o'clock in the morning. This meal . . . is designed to restore the faithful, who are exhausted after a session of four hours in church, and to refresh throats hoarse from singing praises to the Lord. . . . A poularde or a capon with rice is the obligatory dish for this nocturnal meal, taking the place of soup, which is never served. Four hors d'oeuvres, consisting of piping hot sausages, fat well-stuffed andouilles, boudins blancs au crème, and properly defatted black puddings, are its attendants. This is followed by ox (beef) tongue, either pickled or (more likely) dressed as it would be at this time of the year, accompanied by a symmetrical arrangement of a dozen pigs' trotters (feet) stuffed with truffles and pistachio nuts, and a dish of fresh pork cutlets. At each corner of the table are two plates of petits fours, including tarts or tartlets, and two sweet desserts, which may be a cream and an English apple pie. Nine more desserts round off the meal, and the faithful—thus fortified—retire to their devotions at the early morning Mass, preceded by Prime and followed by Tierce.

—Grimod de La Reyniere (1758–1838), *Almanach des Gourmands* first published in 1803

A ROYAL CHRISTMAS DINNER

1896: Britain

Queen Victoria's Christmas dinner menu at Osborne, her holiday home on the Isle of Wight, varied very little from one year to the next.

Her Majesty's Dinner at Osborne

Christmas Day, 1896

Potages.

La Tête de Veau En Tortue Aux trois racines

Poissons.

Le Turbot bouilli sauce hollandaise.

Les Filets de soles frits

Entrée.

Les Kromeskys à la Toulouse.

Relevées.

Les Dindes rôties à la Chipolata.

Chine of Pork

Rt Sirloin of Beef Plum Pudding

Entremets.

Les Asperges sauce mousseline

Mince Pies

Le Pain de riz à la cintra.

Side Table.

Baron of Beef. Woodcock Pie. Brawn.

Wild Boar's Head. Game Pie

CHRISTMAS PUNCH

1694: Spain

Admiral Edward Russell, Commander of the Mediterranean fleet, was looking forward to the end of his long and frustrating tour of duty, but was ordered to over-winter at Cadiz. Russell was very unhappy at the decision, apparently writing to the Admiralty saying, "I am at present under a doubt with myself whether it is not better to die."

In a rather spectacular display of thumbing his nose at those who had perpetrated the unhappy situation upon him, in complete defiance of his orders he threw a huge party for six thousand guests in the grounds of the local governor's estate (Don Francesco de Velasco y Tovar). Tables were laid under the garden walks under the orange trees, and 800 staff served 150 different dishes—but it was the punch that was the scene-stealer.

A magnificent marble fountain was converted into a giant punch-bowl. It was filled with twelve hogsheads of punch. A small boy in a specially built boat rowed around and dispensed the punch to the company. Once the formalities had been completed, the guests got into the spirit of the event both figuratively and literally, "they drew off and in went the mob, with their shoes and stockings and all on, and like to have turned the boat, with the boy over, and so he might have been drowned in punch; but to prevent further danger they sucked it up, and left the punch-bowl behind."

The punch was made from four hogsheads of brandy, one pipe of Malaga wine, twenty gallons of lime-juice, twenty-five hundred lemons, thirteen hundredweight of fine white sugar, five pounds' weight of grated nutmegs, three hundred toasted biscuits, and eight hogsheads of water.

Hogshead: a measure of volume, the exact amount depending on the material being measured, for example: 52.5 Imperial gallons (wine), 54 Imperial gallons

(beer), or 42 Imperial gallons (oil).

EXPERIMENTAL TURKEY

1750: America

In this letter to his brother, written on December 25, 1750, Benjamin Franklin described an electrical experiment that did not go quite as he had planned:

“I have lately made an Experiment in Electricity that I desire never to repeat. Two nights ago being about to kill a Turkey by the Shock from two large Glass Jarrs containing as much electrical fire as forty common Phials, I inadvertently took the whole thro’ my own Arms and Body.

”The Company present (whose talking to me, and to one another I suppose occasioned my Inattention to what I was about) Say that the flash was very great and the crack as loud as a Pistol; yet my Senses being instantly gone, I neither Saw the one nor hear the other; nor did I feel the Stroke on my hand, tho’ I afterwards found it raised a round swelling where the fire enter’d as big as half a Pistol Bullet by which you may judge of the Quickness of the Electrical Fire.

“You may Communicate this to Mr. Bowdoin As A Caution to him,” he cautioned, “but do not make it mor Publick, for I am Ashamed to have been Guilty of so Notorious A Blunder.”

FOOD BUSINESS

1923: USA

Design Patent D 63,657 was granted for a new Coca-Cola bottle. The bottles are embossed with the patent date and the phrase “Christmas Bottle.”

FOOD & WAR

1864: USA, American Civil War

From the diary of John S Jackman, a Confederate soldier: “For breakfast had

fresh pork, biscuit, baked sweet—potatoes, *etc.* Cool disagreeable morning. Bad prospect for a Christmas dinner—can't cook in the rain.”

1944: Germany, World War II

Lance-corporal John James Bird of the 1st Airborne Division became a prisoner of war of Nazi Germany in September 1944.

By now, Xmas was coming on the scene, and what a way to celebrate it—in a stalag (not my idea of fun and games, by any means). Still there was not much I could do about it. This time before Xmas was a rather lean period, but relieved by an issue of a Red Cross parcel (1 per three men) which did cheer us up somewhat. My Xmas fare went as follows, for breakfast fried egg, meat roll and fried bread and a cup of sweet tea—dinner was macaroni soup. High tea consisted of curried rice & veal, diced vegetables & macaroni, followed by the Xmas pudding (stalag variety), potatoes, sugar, cocoa, butter, and a custard made from cream, rice, jam, and more sugar. Using one's imagination it tasted slightly like the pudding we would have been eating at home (one needed a vivid imagination, too). These meals were interspersed throughout the day with brews of tea and cocoa, and cigarettes. That was Xmas Day 1944 in Stalag VIIIC, not to be repeated, I hope.

1870: Siege of Paris

From *The Diary of a Besieged Resident* by Henry Labouchere:

In an English restaurant two turkeys had been treasured up for the important occasion, but unfortunately a few days ago they anticipated their fate, and most ill-naturedly insisted upon dying. One fortunate Briton has got ten pounds of camel, and has invited about twenty of his countrymen to aid him in devouring this singular substitute for turkey. Another gives himself airs because he has some potted turkey, which is solemnly to be consumed to-day spread on bread. I am myself going to dine with the correspondent of one of your contemporaries. On the same floor as himself lives a family who left Paris before the commencement of the siege. Necessity knows no law; so the other day he opened their door with a certain amount of gentle violence, and after a diligent search, discovered in the larder two onions, some potatoes. and a ham. These. with a fowl. which I believe has been

procured honestly, are to constitute our Christmas dinner.

FOOD & THE LAW

1733: Britain

The Molasses Act came into effect on this day. In summary, the act stated:

[T]here shall be raised, levied, collected and paid, unto and for the use of his Majesty . . . , upon all rum or spirits of the produce or manufacture of any of the colonies or plantations in America, not in the possession or under the dominion of his Majesty. . . .

The act had been promulgated at the insistence of large plantation owners in the British West Indies, and was directed at the French West Indies. In practice, the consequences of the act were not what were anticipated. It forced American colonists to buy more expensive British West Indian sugar. One of the results was an increase in smuggling, which in turn led to vigorous counter-measures and a general increase in hostility. The act turned out to be one more revolutionary trigger.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1768: At Sea

From the *Endeavour* Journal of Joseph Banks:

Christmas day; all good Christians that is to say all hands get abominably drunk so that at night there was scarce a sober man in the ship, wind thank god very moderate or the lord knows what would have become of us.

1769: Manawa Islands

From the *Endeavour* Journal of Joseph Banks: “‘of Cape Maria Van Diemen’ Christmas day: Our Goose pye was eat with great approbation and in the Evening all hands were as Drunk as our forefathers usd to be upon the like occasion.”

1805: USA

From the journals and records of the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Coast and back in 1804–1806: “We would have Spent this day in feasting, had we any thing either to raise our Sperits or even gratify our appetites, our Diner concisted of pore Elk, so much Spoiled that we eate it thro mear necessity, Some Spoiled pounded fish and a few roots.”

1844: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt’s journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia: “We returned to Brown’s Lagoons, and entered our camp just as our companions were sitting down to their Christmas dinner of suet pudding and stewed cockatoos. The day was cloudy and sultry; we had had a heavy thunder-storm on Christmas eve.”

1912: Antarctica

From the diary of Douglas Mawson’s Antarctic expedition of 1911–1913:

Christmas Day, Wednesday. Turned out and got away at 8 A.M., doing nine miles before lunch down a steep descent. The sun was very hot, and after lunch the surface became sticky, but at 5 P.M. we reached the depot, having done fifteen miles one hundred yards and descended two thousand three hundred feet.

I am afraid I shall have to go back to travelling by night, as the snow is so very soft down here during the day; not soft in the same way as the freshly fallen powdery stuff we had on the hills, but half-thawed and wet, freezing at night into a splendid surface for the runners. The shade temperature at 5.30 P.M. to-day was 29 degrees F., and a thermometer laid in the sun on the dark rocks went up to 87 degrees F.

Some time ago, a plum-pudding was found in one of our food-bags, put there, I believe, by Moyes. We ate it to-night in addition to the ordinary ration, and, with a small taste of spirits from the medical store, managed to get up quite a festive feeling. After dinner the Union Jack and Australian Ensign were hoisted on the rocks and I formally took possession of the land in the name of the Expedition. for King George V. and the Australian

Commonwealth.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1662: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

Up pretty early, leaving my wife not well in bed. . . . I walked home again and there dined by my wife's bedside with great content, having a mess of brave plum-porridge and a roasted Pullett for dinner; and I sent for a mince-pie abroad, my wife not being well to make any herself yet.

1666: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

Lay pretty long in bed. And then rise, leaving my wife desirous to sleep, having sat up till 4 this morning seeing her maids make mince pies. I to church. . . . Then home, and dined well on some ribbs of beef roasted and mince pies; only my wife, brother, and Barker, and plenty of good wine of my own.

1773: Norfolk, England

James Woodforde was a scholar and then fellow of New College, Oxford. He returned there in December, 1773, to become sub-warden and part of his responsibility was the management of the Common Room, which included the menu planning. He is proud of the success of his first social event, the senior fellows' Christmas dinner:

We had a very handsome dinner of my ordering, as I order dinner every day being Sub-Warden. We had for dinner, two fine Codds boiled with fried Souls round them and oyster sauce, a fine sirloin of Beef roasted, some peas soup and an orange Pudding for the first course, for the second, we had a lease of Wild Ducks rosted, a fore Qu: of Lamb and sallad and mince Pies. We had a grace cup before the second course. . . . After the second course there was a fine plumb cake brought to the senr. Table as is usual on this

day. . . . I supped *etc.* in the Chequer, we had Rabbits for supper roasted as is usual on this day. . . . The Sub-Warden has one to himself: The Bursars each one apiece, the Senr. Fellows ½ a one each. The Junr. Fellows a rabbit between three.

1801: England

John Brand was an English antiquarian. He notes the dying tradition of plum porridge on Christmas Day.

I dined at the chaplain's table at St. James's on Christmas Day, 1801, and partook of the first thin served and eaten on that festival at that table, *i.e.* a tureen full of rich luscious plum-porridge. I do not know that the custom is anywhere else retained.

DECEMBER 26

SAINT STEPHEN'S DAY

England

In the northern parts of the county of Yorkshire farmers' wives made large goose pies on St. Stephen's Day, many of which were given to the poor. One pie was retained and was not cut until Candlemas (February 2).

In the parish of Drayton Beauchamp in the county of Buckinghamshire, there was an interesting tradition called "Stephening." The custom had already been discontinued in 1842 when *A Collection of Old English Customs* was published.

There was formerly an usage in the parish called Stephening. All the inhabitants used to go on St. Stephen's day to the Rectory, and eat as much bread and cheese, and drink as much ale as they chose, at the expense of the Rector.

The usage gave rise to so much rioting that the late Rector discontinued it, and distributed an annual sum instead, in proportion to the number of claimants; but the number of inhabitants increased so considerably, that about the year 1827 he was induced to withhold the annual payments. The

people have sometimes since come up to the rectory to ask for the Stephening money, but have always been refused.

Nothing is known concerning the origin or duration of this usage, nor was any evidence produced to the Commissioners, showing any legal obligation on the part of the Rector to continue the above practice

Poland

There are a number of food-related traditions on St. Stephen's Day. For some reason no longer known, boys and girls used to throw walnuts at each other on Saint Stephen's Day. Also in earlier times, water and salt were blessed on this day and kept by farmers to be fed to their horses in case of sickness. Special bread in the shape of horseshoes (known as St Stephen's horns, or *podkovy*) was baked and eaten on the day.

CRIME & PUNISHMENT

1683: Scotland

A strict, puritanical Protestant Reformation ethic was at work on this day at the Kirk-session of Glasgow. Five persons were ordered to make public repentance because they had observed Yule, and the bakers of the city were warned to discontinue the practice of baking Yule bread.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1865: USA

James H. Nason, of Franklin, Massachusetts, was granted Patent No. 51,741 for a Coffee Percolator not unlike the modern version.

The invention relates to the construction of apparatus for preparing the extractor infusion from coffee, or, as it is generally termed, for "making coffee." Various percolators or filters of more or less practicability are in common use for obtaining clear beverages from coffee without the use of fining substances; but all of them, so far as I know, are defective in construction, in that they permit the escape of the aroma from the coffee during or subsequent to the process of preparation

during or subsequent to the process of preparation.

My filter or percolator is designed to obviate this defect by interposing between the coffee-chamber and the vessel through which the water passes to this chamber fluid-joints, which shall prevent all escape of the volatile principle from the coffee when the apparatus is in use, and it is in this construction that my invention consists.

A ROYAL WEDDING FEAST

12 51: York, England

Royal wedding feasts must be planned many months in advance, and in medieval times this was even more essential as stock had to be reared in excess of normal numbers (and presumably of superb quality), and exotic ingredients sourced from far distances. When the wedding date of Henry III's daughter Margaret to Alexander III of Scotland was set for December 26 in 1251, live beasts were purchased in York and towns further distant in July, to be pastured and fattened ready for the big day.

Orders were made for 300 red and fallow deer, to be salted, in July. In October, sheriffs in the regions around York where the wedding was to take place, were ordered to source 7,000 hens, game birds, rabbits, hares, pigs, and 70 boars. November, 1,000 more deer (roe, red deer, and fallow deer) and 100 more boars were ordered. Fish was ordered in December and included 60,000 salt herrings, 1,000 green fish (i.e., fresh fish, probably cod,) 10,000 haddock, and 500 eels. Freshwater fish was provided from the King's own breeding ponds on the River Foss. Bread of course was to be made locally—all 68,500 loaves of it, costing the monumental sum of £7,000.

As for wine, the King one of the orders specified wine for infusing with spices. The keeper of the wines at York was ordered to deliver “of the better sort . . . two casks (*dolia*) of white wine to make cloved wine.”

A chronicler of the time wrote of the festivities:

If I attempted to display all the grandeur of this solemnity—the numbers of the noble and illustrious guests,—the richness and variety of the dresses,—the multitudes of the minstrels, mimicks, and others whose business it was to amuse and divert the company, those of my readers who were not

present should imagine that I was imposing upon their credulity. The following particular will enable them to form a judgement of the whole. The archbishop of York made the king of England a present of 60 fat oxen, which made only one article of provision for the marriage-feast, and were all consumed at that entertainment.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1492: Hispaniola

Christopher Columbus was on his first voyage when his flagship, the *Santa Maria* ran aground on the island of Hispaniola on the night of December 24/25. There was not sufficient room on the remaining two ships to take the seamen from the ship, and as a result the first settlement of Europeans in the New World was founded. Columbus (who thought he was in Japan) he called the place La Navidad. “The king [Guacanagari] ate in the caravel with the admiral . . . and gave him a repast of two or three kinds of *ajes* with them shrimp and game, and other foods which they had, and some of their bread which they call cacabi [cazavi].”

FOOD WAR

1899: South Africa, Boer War

From *The Diary of a Doctor's Wife* during the Siege of Kimberley, by Winifred Heberden:

The men stood to arms both yesterday and to-day at 3 a.m., expecting “Christmas Boxes” from the Boers, but everything was quiet at our end of Kimberley. . . . A proclamation from Colonel Kekewich still further limits the sale and supply of foodstuffs, though the prices are the same—10 ozs of flour, or 14 ozs of bread is the limit to Europeans. Coloured people are allowed to have more meal; and Indians are allowed to buy rice. Tea is limited to a quarter oz, and coffee half oz each person per diem. Eggs are now 6/6 a dozen, and so scarce that their price is sure to rise rapidly. Potatoes have vanished, and we have dried beans or crushed mealies with our meat. Occasionally some vegetables or salads appear, and we can buy a little fruit as an addition sometimes, which the hotel cook stews if

necessary. Permits are now required before you can buy certain things at the grocers, and you must get your week's supply at the time, stating how many are in the house. Hotels are supplied for their regular boarders, so guests, or a dinner at another hotel than your own, are now impossible.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1661: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

[A]nd after dinner Sir Wm. Came to me, and he and his some and daughter and I and my wife by Coach to Moorefields to walk (but it was most foule weather); and so we went into an alehouse and there eat some cakes and ale; and a Washeall-bowl woman and a girl came to us and sang to us; and after all was done, I called my boy (Waynman) to us to eat some cake that was left, and the woman of the house told us that he had called for two Cakes and a pot of ale for himself, at which I was angry and am resolved to correct him for it. So home; and Sir Wm. Penn and his son and daughter to supper me to a good Turkey, and we were merry at Cards late. And so to bed.

1662: London, England

From the Diary of Samuel Pepys. His wife had been unwell over the Christmas period: "Up. My wife to the making of Christmas-pies all day, being now pretty well again."

1794: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde. He has been ill:

I hope I am something better, but rather languid & low. Could eat but very little for dinner to day. Appetite bad. . . . Dinner to day, Calfs Fry & a Rabbit roasted. I drank plentifully of Port Wine after dinner, instead of one Glass, drank 7. or 8. Wine Glasses, and it seemed to do me much good, being better for it.

1852: Melbourne, Australia

From *A Letter to his Father from Thomas Henry Severn, newly arrived passenger on the ship Prince Alfred*”:

My Dear Papa

I send with this my diary, you must not think it unkind of me because I did not write by the “Sydney” steamer, to announce my safe arrival, but on arriving on shore everything was as dear and uncomfortable that I could not find a place to sit down to write in, and secondly I had not time for I went to work the day after . But I will give you an account of the place. We arrived here on Saturday , and by all accounts everything was very dear—for instance—bread 2/- the 4lb loaf, salt 4d per lb—meat 6d per lb, coffee 1/8 per lb, sugar 4d per lb, lump sugar 10d. Spirits etc very dear—beer 6d per glass or 2/- per pot etc and everything in comparison. . . . On the morning after I arrived I went to a boarding house to live where they charged me £2.2/- per week for breakfast dinner and tea, and a bed with 12 in the same room. Oh it is a wretched place destitute of every comfort is this Australia. Cherries 4/- per lb—Cabbages 1/ each Apples 4/ per lb and not worth eating. . . . On Christmas day we had some baked pork and plum pudding which was very good. They charged 9d for baking it and if you take 1/- will not give you the change.— . . . It is a wicked country and a devil’s life.

1870: England

From the Diary of the Rev. Francis Kilvert:

Much warmer and almost a thaw. Left Clyro at 11am. At Chippenham my father and John were on the platform. After dinner we opened a hamper of game sent by Venables, and found a pheasant, a hare, a brace of rabbits, a brace of woodcocks and a turkey. Just like them, and their constant kindness.

1874: At Sea

Thomas Payne Judkins and his wife were en route from England to New Zealand

aboard the sailing ship *Assaye*. They left on September 1 1874. On December 26, in the port of Auckland he wrote:

They gave us great encouragement, but would not permit us to go ashore till Monday. . . . Our doctor went on shore at the same time and ordered fresh provisions—bread, beef and mutton, new potatoes and cabbages, carrots and turnips, onions and green peas—which were brought in boats. It was nearly twelve o'clock at night when this was completed.

DECEMBER 27

AN ODE TO POMMERY

Ode to Pommery 1874

Farewell, then Pommery Seventy-Four!

With reverential sips

We part and grieve that never more

Such wine may pass our lips.

—*Vanity Fair*, December 27, 1894

INDIAN TEA

1861: Calcutta (Kolkata), India

The first Tea Auction ever to be held in India was conducted on this day by general auctioneers Mackenzie Lyall Co, on behalf of the brokering firm, Thomas Marten and Co. (now J. Thomas and Co.) Over 350 chests (a massive quantity at the time) of Pekoe, Souchong, and Congo of Cachar went under the hammer at 2 Mission Row.

J. Thomas and Co. is today the single largest tea auctioneer in the world, and currently handles over 155 million tons of tea annually—about one third of all of the tea auctioned in India.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1808: England

Jane Austen wrote to her sister Cassandra:

Castle Square. Our evening party on Thursday produced nothing more remarkable than Miss Murden's coming too, though she had declined it absolutely in the morning, and sitting very ungracious and very silent with us from seven o'clock till half after eleven, for so late was it, owing to the chairmen, before we got rid of them.

The last hour, spent in yawning and shivering in a wide circle round the fire, was dull enough, but the tray had admirable success. The widgeon and the preserved ginger were as delicious as one could wish. But as to our black butter, do not decoy anybody to Southampton by such a lure, for it is all gone. The first pot was opened when Frank and Mary were here, and proved not at all what it ought to be; it was neither solid nor entirely sweet, and on seeing it Eliza remembered that Miss Austen had said she did not think it had been boiled enough. It was made, you know, when we were absent. Such being the event of the first pot, I would not save the second, and we therefore ate it in unpretending privacy; and though not what it ought to be, part of it was very good.

The "black butter" that Austen refers to is a thick, dark conserve of fruit—typically apples, although as in the recipe below, almost anything can be used.

Black Butter

Three pounds of fruit, (viz. currants, gooseberries, raspberries, and cherries) to one pound of sixpenny sugar boiled till it is quite thick: it must waste half the quantity. It is a very pleasant sweetmeat, and keeps well.

—*The Lady's Assistant for Regulating her Table*, Charlotte Mason, 1777

There is a second type of black butter, called by the French *beurre noire*, and used as a sauce for various dishes.

Black Butter

Shake a quarter of a pound of butter in a frying-pan till it becomes a deep brown; let it settle; skim and pour it clear off; wipe the pan, and return the butter into it; add two spoonfuls of tarragon vinegar, salt, and mix it.

—*Domestic Economy and Cookery, for rich and poor, by a Lady* (1827)

1918: England

The novelist D. H. Lawrence wrote to Katherine Mansfield about his Christmas dinner with his sister at Ripley.

[W]e were at Ripley in time for turkey and Christmas pudding. My God, what masses of food here, turkey, large tongues, long wall of roast loin of pork, pork-pies, sausages, mince-pies, dark cakes covered with almonds, cheese-cakes, lemon tarts, jellies, endless masses of food, with whisky, gin, port wine, burgundy, muscatel. It seem incredible.

FOOD & WAR

1854: Crimean War

Charles Usherwood's Service Journal, 1852–1856: "In Divisions orders No 8 of today Returns of them entitled to the Alma Clasp were required describing those who marched from the Bulgarian River as only entitled thereto. Rice or pearl barley authorized to be issued."

1897: USA

From *With the Armies of Menelik, a Journal of an expedition from Ethiopia to Lake Rudolf* by Alexander K. Bulatovich. He set off on this day, and described his supplies for his journey.

Consisting of only the most necessary items, my baggage was not very large: I had two pack-loads of cartridges and two trunks (containing my clothes, linen, gifts, money and books) which also served me as a bed; a medicine chest adapted so it could be carried by hand if necessary; another similar chest with dining and cooking equipment and canned food ("Magi" dried broth), tea and sugar; a chest with wine; a chest with photographic equipments; and in addition, two packs with miscellaneous items. I provided

equipment; and in addition, two packs with miscellaneous items. I provided for food stuffs for five days, counting on replenishing the stock on the way. Thanks to these measures, half of the mules went without packs, considerably facilitating the journey to Kaffa.

DECEMBER 28

MUSKRAT DINNER

1906: USA

The Monroe Yacht Club in Monroe, Michigan, held its fourth annual muskrat banquet on this night. The origin of the tradition is the stuff of legend rather than history, but it is colorful enough to be repeated here. It is said that at some uncertain time in the past, that local Catholics, forbidden to eat meat on Fridays, successfully petitioned the Pope to declare the muskrat to be a fish, since it is an aquatic animal. How this led to the first banquet in 1902 is even less certain, but the event has not been without controversy or the intervention of religion, politics, or the press.

In 1987, the Archbishop of Detroit almost destroyed the tradition by declaring muskrat could no longer be eaten as fish. A Detroit Free Press report alerted the Michigan Department of Agriculture, which had presumably up until then been looking the other way, which then banned the sale of muskrat for health violations. A State cultural tradition then being at stake, legislators swung into action and ensured that legislation was passed to allow the exclusion of wild-game dinners from meat inspections.

One thousand people attended the banquet, and there were guests from many other states and cities including New York, Seattle, Washington, and Bismarck, North Dakota.

The *Monroe Democrat* the following week described the event:

Number of muskrats prepared: 2,100; number eaten: 1,800

Receipts \$1,500; Expenses \$1,200; Balance \$300. These amounts are only approximate.

The attendance figures and the number of muskrats prepared are probably...

The attendance figures and the number of muskrats consumed no doubt are disappointing to those who have depended for their information upon the glowing accounts of the advance agent and the reporters for the Detroit and Toledo dailies, according to whom over 5,000 muskrats had been eaten and 3,000 people did the job.

Preparations had been made on an extravagant scale and the expected 3,000 people could have been handled. An annex 100 by 40 feet had been built south of the Armory and almost the entire length of this was used as a bar, upon whose receipts depended in a great measure the success or failure of the project, for the \$1.00 admission failed to cover the expense of the theatrical entertainment and the cost of the catering, preparing and serving the muskrats. Two reasons were mainly responsible for keeping down the attendance from out of town, rain in the evening and the fact that the day came too soon after Christmas, with not even one pay day in between. It was also a noticeable fact that outside of Monroe Yacht Club enthusiasts and business men who patronize all events given by local organizations, there were but very few Monroe people in attendance.

But after all it was a big event, the biggest of the kind given in the city.

The rhymesters also got busy and began to express their sentiments in meter adapted to popular tunes.

Detroit furnished the following, to the air of "Tammany"

Muskrat town, muskrat town,

Detroit is all right to see,

But Monroe is the place for me,

Roast 'em brown, roast 'em brown,

Gravy, gravy, gravy, gravy,

Choke 'em down.

All the catering privileges were let to George J. Wahl, manager of Wahl House. From parboiling the rats to serving them at the table, he handled all

the arrangements, and the bar privileges were also his. Considering the number of muskrats served, they were remarkable good and no fault could be found with them. He brought seven professional waiters to supervise the serving, while thirteen volunteers from the yacht club assisted. The rats were stewed in sweet corn; mashed potatoes and butter, slaw, celery, bread and coffee being served with them. There was no limit to the number of helpings and on Tuesday morning we ran across an individual who confessed he had eaten five rats, but had eaten nothing since. In the annex Mr. Wahl had ten expert bar tenders from Detroit and Toledo, who specialty was “muskrat cocktails” at 20 cents per drink. Only one brand of beer was called for, that of the Koppitz-Melchers Brewing Co. of Detroit, who had prepared a special brew for the event and designed a suitable muskrat label for the bottle.

The cooking of the muskrats was under the direct supervision of Chef Ed Lemerand, the best muskrat cook in the land. Already plans are being discussed for next year’s event, even before the affairs of the last one are settled. Whatever plan is adopted, it will quite certainly be different from the present one, for no two muskrat banquets can be alike.

How to Cook Muskrat

Muskrat.—You may be driven to this, some day, and will then learn that muskrat, properly prepared, is not half bad. The French-Canadians found that out long ago.

Skin and clean carefully four muskrats, being particular not to rupture musk or gall sac. Take the hind legs and saddles, place in pot with a little water, a little julienne (or fresh vegetables, if you have them), some pepper and salt, and a few slices of pork or bacon. Simmer slowly over fire until half done. Remove to baker, place water from pot in the baking pan, and cook until done, basting frequently. This will be found a most toothsome dish.

Muskrat may also be broiled over the hot coals, basting with a bit of pork held on a switch above the beastie.

—*Camp Cookery* (1910) by Horace Kephart

FOOD BUSINESS

1897: USA

Henry J. Heinz registered the “Heinz” trademark for its various bottled preserves and condiments; stated first used June 1, 1893.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1886: USA

Josephine Garis Cochran was granted Patent No. 355,139 for a “Dish Washing Machine.” The inventor described the mechanism of action of the hand-operated machine:

[A] continous stream of either soap suds or clear hot water is supplied to a crate holding the holding the racks or cages containing the dishes while the crate is rotated so as to bring the greater portion thereof under the action of the water.

MANIFESTO OF FUTURIST COOKING

1930: Italy

The Manifesto of Futurist Cookery was first published in the *Gazzetta del Popolo*. A few of its points were:

While recognizing that badly or crudely nourished men have achieved great things in the past, we affirm this truth: men think dream and act according to what they eat and drink.

Let us consult on this matter our lips, tongue, palate, taste buds, glandular secretions and probe with genius into gastric chemistry.

Above all we believe necessary. . . . The abolition of pastasciutta, an absurd Italian gastronomic religion.

It may be that a diet of cod, roast beef and steamed pudding is beneficial to

the English, cold cuts and cheese to the Dutch and sauerkraut, smoked [salt] pork and sausage to the Germans, but pasta is not beneficial to the Italians. For example it is completely hostile to the vivacious spirit and passionate, generous, intuitive soul of the Neapolitans. If these people have been heroic fighters, inspired artists, awe-inspiring orators, shrewd lawyers, tenacious farmers it was in spite of their voluminous daily plate of pasta. When they eat it they develop that typical ironic and sentimental scepticism which can often cut short their enthusiasm.

The perfect meal requires:

1. Originality and harmony in the table setting (crystal, china, décor) extending to the flavours and colours of the foods.
2. Absolute originality in the food.

In response to the Futurists' condemnation of pasta, the Duke of Bovino, the Mayor of Naples, apparently said "The angels in Paradise eat nothing but vermicelli al pomodoro."

—*The Duke of Bovino, the Mayor of Naples*

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1798: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde:

Frost last Night & this Morning & all the Day intense—it froze in every part of the House even in the Kitchen. Milk and Cream tho' kept in the Kitchen all froze. Meat like blocks of Wood. It froze in the Kitchen even by the fire in a very few Minutes. So severe a Weather I think I never felt before. Even the Meat in our Pantry all froze & also our Bread. I think the Cold was never more severe in my Life. Giblett Soup & Piggs Fry for Dinner to day &c.

1801: England

From the Grasmere journals of Dorothy Wordsworth: "William, Mary and I set

off on foot to Keswick. We carried some cold mutton in our pockets, and dined at John Stanley's where they were making Christmas pies."

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1866: Africa

From David Livingstone's journal of his expedition to find the source of the Nile:

By giving Moerwa a good large cloth he was induced to cook a mess of *maëre* or millet and elephant's stomach; it was so good to get a full meal that I could have given him another cloth, and the more so as it was accompanied by a message that he would cook more next day and in larger quantity.

FOOD & WAR

1915: World War I, Commission for Relief in Belgium

Lord Eustace Percy of the British Foreign Office wrote to the Chairman of the ICRB, Herbert Hoover, on this day on a number of issues, including the necessity for the recycling of food cans.

Second, as to the condensed milk. Our people are firm on the point about the return of the empty tins. The danger does not arise from the amount of metal in the tins but from the tins themselves. Germany is very short of tins, so much so that she is sending out empty tins to be refilled with preserved meat, etc., in neutral countries, and is collecting empties high and low.

Now I quite see that this means a considerable amount of new organisation on your part, but the recollection of these tins should present no huge difficulties in itself. Each commune can collect them fairly easily from the consumer each time the latter applies for a new ration, and all the way up the chain. . . .

Meanwhile, can you take steps to have the Commission in Belgium and France keep a careful eye on the Germans and stop them at once if they try

to collect tins from house to house as they are doing in Germany itself?

DECEMBER 29

A PROCLAMATION FOR THE SUPPRESSION OF COFFEE HOUSES

1675: England

On this day, King Charles II issued A Proclamation for the Suppression of Coffee Houses, in response to the increasing controversy about the proliferation of coffee houses.

Whereas it is most apparent that the multitude of Coffee Houses of late years set up and kept within this Kingdom . . . and the great resort of idle and disaffected persons to them, have produced very evil and dangerous effects; as well for that many tradesmen and others, do herein misspend much of their time, which might and probably would be employed in and about their Lawful Calling and Affairs; but also for that in such houses divers, false, malicious, and scandalous reports are devised and spread abroad to the Defamation of His Majesty's Government, and to the disturbance of the Peace and Quiet of the Realm; his Majesty hath thought it fit and necessary, that the said Coffee Houses be (for the Future) put down and suppressed.

A year earlier the Womens Petition Against Coffee had had a different sort of complaint, saying that a morning drinking in the tavern till "Drunk as a Drum" and then staggering back to the Coffeehouse to "soberize themselves with coffee" made their men impotent "the Excessive use of that Newfangled, Abominable, Heathenish Liquor called Coffee, which . . . has so Eunucht our Husbands. . . . They come from it with nothing moist but their snotty Noses, nothing stiffe but their Joints, nor standing but their Ears." Men retaliated, saying that coffee "makes the Erection more vigorous, the Ejaculation more full, adds a spiritualescency to the Sperme."

Charles's edict was to take effect on January 10, but the popularity of coffee was greater than the controversy it generated, and the protest was such that he was forced to back down, and the edict was withdrawn on January 8.

FOOD & WAR

1870: Siege of Paris

The niece of the famous organ-builder Aristide Cavallé-Coll, Berthe Cavallé - Reinburg was trapped inside the city, and in a letter to her mother on this day wrote:

We have been blockaded for a hundred days. It is below 12o and I'm thinking about those poor wounded soldiers. We are beginning to eat black bread. We ate Aunt Reinburg's cat; it's a shame for it was such a pretty animal! We are going to have his skin tanned to have something to remember him by.—I have a piece of dog meat I'm going to marinate and we will eat it like steak.—Mr. Simil the architect, is going out. He has just offered to get us beef fillets at 10 francs the kilo. The prices of some things are frightening; they have to be seen to be believed. Eggs are selling for 1.5 francs and pigeons cost 15 francs each. Mr. Simil has just told us this. What a fortune we have in our ten pigeons!

1897: Africa

From *With the Armies of Menelik*, a journal of an expedition from Ethiopia to Lake Rudolf by Alexander K. Bulatovich:

By eleven in the morning, we climbed the crest of the former crater of Mount Dendi. . . . The General came to meet me and invited me to his home where dinner was already prepared for us. . . . One of the cooks, a beautiful young Galla girl, having washed her hands and having rolled the sleeves of her shirt to the elbow, kneeled in front of our basket and from little pots began to take out on slices of injera (a flat cake) all kinds of foods and to put them on the bread which was spread out on the basket. What an array of foods: hard-boiled eggs cooked in some unusually sharp sauce, and ragout of mutton with red pepper, and chicken gravy with ginger, and tongue, and ground or scraped meat—all abundantly seasoned with butter and powdered with pepper and spices—and cold sour milk and sour cream... In the corners of the fire in front of us, cut into little pieces, tebs meat was roasting. And the chief of the slaughter-house held over our basket a huge piece of beef. We ate with our hands, tearing off little petals of injera and collecting with them large amounts of all sorts of foods. My mouth burned from the

them large amounts of all sorts of foods. My mouth burned from the quantity of pepper. Tears came to my eyes. My sense of taste was dulled. And we devoured everything indiscriminately, cooling our mouths, from time to time, with sour cream or by drinking a wonderful mead—tej—from little decanters wrapped in little silk handkerchiefs. They also invited Zelepukin to dinner. When we were full, they called the officers of the Fitaurari and my ashkers. They sat in close circles around ten baskets with injera, over which servants held large pieces of raw meat. Wine bearers served mead to the diners in large horn glasses. All ate decorously and silently. At the end of the meal, just as decorously, they all got up and left at the same time, not bowing to anyone.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1844: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

Following the creek down, we found water in chains of ponds, and watercourses coming from a belt of scrub occupying the ground between the creek and the mountains. Fine, though narrow, but well-grassed flats extended along Comet Creek. We observed growing on the creek, the dwarf Koorajong (*Grewia*), a small rough-leaved fig tree, a species of *Tribulus*, and the native *Portulaca*. The latter afforded us an excellent salad; but was much more acid than I had found it in other parts of the country, where I had occasionally tasted it. The native melon of the Darling Downs and of the Gwyder, grew here also. Of animals, we saw several kangaroos, emus, native companions, and wallabies.

1909: Africa

Theodore Roosevelt was on safari. During the afternoon of the previous day, he and his son Kermit killed an elephant: “[N]ext morning all of us came out to the carcass. He was full grown, and was ten feet nine inches high. The tusks were rather short, but thick, and weighed a hundred and ten pounds the pair. Out of the trunk we made excellent soup.”

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1660: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

Within all the morning. Several people to speak with me; Mr. Shepley for L100; Mr. Kennard and Warren, the merchant, about deals for my Lord. Captain Robert Blake lately come from the Straights about some Florence Wine for my Lord, and with him I went to Sir W. Pen, who offering me a barrel of oysters I took them both home to my house (having by chance a good piece of roast beef at the fire for dinner), and there they dined with me, and sat talking all the afternoon-good company.

1786: Norfolk, England

From the diary of Parson James Woodforde: “ Had another Tub of Gin and another of the best Coniac Brandy brought me this Evening abt 9. We heard a thump at the Front Door about that time, but did not know what it was, till I went out and found the 2 Tubs—but nobody there.”

Here is another example of the good vicar being quite prepared to purchase smuggled goods.

1974

The Australian writer, Patrick White wrote to Ronald Waters on this day:

I was cheated by a Polish Jewess (very like Lady Fairfax) over a goose. I had ordered from her delicatessen; when I got it home, after my third trip to the shop, and unwrapped the parcel, it was not much more than a drake. I couldn't face a fourth trip and a row, so we made do with that. Fortunately we were only four at dinner on the night, and I made a good stuffing.

DECEMBER 30

PEACE BANQUET

1911: New York

A “Peace Banquet” was held on this night at the Waldorf-Astoria. The Honorary president was Andrew Carnegie, and the co-operating Peace Societies were: the American Peace and Arbitration league, the International Peace Forum, the New York Peace Society, and The League of Peace. The menu was:

Feuille de Laitue, Suédoise

*

Tortue Verte à l’Anglaise

*

Olives Celéri Amandes salées

*

Filet de bass, à la Mornay

Pommes de terre, Hollandaise

*

Mousse de riz de veau, Virginienne

*

Mignon de filet de boeuf à la Créole

Pommes de terre, Palestine Petits pois, sautés

*

Sorbet Prunelle

*

Pigeonneaux rôti sur canapé

• • • • •

Salade de saison

*

Glaces fantaisies

Petits fours Fruits

Café

FOOD & WAR

1945: Britain, World War II

The first shipment of bananas to arrive in Britain for five years arrived at Avonmouth docks (Bristol). The Lord Mayor of Bristol, James Owen was there to give a civic welcome to the cargo of 90,000 stems of bananas (and 14,000 cases of oranges) from Jamaica. It was announced that the bananas would be ripened and sold at one shilling and one pence a pound, for youngsters under the age of eighteen.

Importation of bananas was prohibited in 1940 as they were not a necessary food, and shipping space had to be preserved for essentials, and for military use. Before this time, bananas constituted one-fifth of all fruit eaten in Britain. During the war, British mothers sometimes made a substitute for mashed bananas—mashed turnip or parsnip flavored with banana essence. By 1945, a whole generation of young children had never tasted a banana, and when they were finally distributed there were several reports of children attempting to eat them skin and all.

Cargoes of bananas began to be imported regularly from this date onwards. The first to arrive at the West India Docks in the Thames arrived in January 1946, and this was followed in March with a cargo of ten million bananas.

DISCOVERIES & INVENTIONS

1780: Britain

John Graefer was granted Patent No. 1275 for “Drying and preparing”

vegetables so that they would keep a twelvemonth or longer without losing any of their “real natural flavour.” The method involved boiling the vegetables “the space of a minute or thereabouts” before handing them in “a room impregnated with heat or fumigation by means of a buzaglo or any other stove, or a steam issuing through funnels, or by the natural heat of the sun or atmosphere, where they must continue until they are perfectly dry.

Graeffler appeared to have developed the process for the use of the Royal Navy, and specifically for “a vegetable of the Brassica kind, generally known by the name of green and brown borecole, scotch or other kale with a salt solution and drying so it will keep for up to a year.”

PUDDINGS OR BOMBS?

1997: Britain

The BBC reported that Manchester Airport’s £14m. security scanner system could not tell the difference between Christmas puddings and the explosive Semtex—pudding apparently having a similar density of “organic matter” to the explosive. Security officers were forced to examine hundreds of bags before allowing them onto aircraft.

FOOD & WAR

1899: South Africa. Boer War

From *The Diary of a Doctor’s Wife* during the Siege of Kimberley, by Winifred Heberden:

Had a long walk round Kimberley to get a Condensed Milk ‘Permit’, signed by the military authorities. It has first to be made out by your family doctor (Jack was very convenient in this case). The limit is two tins a week for each child. The hotel has now finished up its stock, so I must get some for Reggie myself. There was a big crowd all morning at the Town Hall where they issue tea and coffee permits, and those for bread and flour, *etc.* As groceries lessen the struggle at the butchers becomes worse every morning, and yet many people, especially those who have not large families, prefer to go without meat for many days together

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1661: London, England

From the Diary of Samuel Pepys:

At the Miter, whither I had invited all my old acquaintances of the Exchequer to a good Chine of beefe—which with three barels of oysters and three pullets and plenty of wine and mirth was our dinner. There was about twelve of us . . . and here I made them a foolish promise to give them one this day twelvemonth, and so for ever while I live. But I do not entend it.

1663: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys:

Lord's day. Up and alone to church, where a common sermon of Mr. Mills, and so home to dinner in our parler, my wife being clean, [having cleaned it] and the first time we have dined here a great while together, and in the afternoon went to church with me also, and there begun to take her place above Mrs. Pen, which heretofore out of a humour she was wont to give her as an affront to my Lady Batten. After a dull sermon of the Scotchman, home, and there I found my brother Tom and my two cozens Scotts, he and she, the first time they were ever here. And by and by in comes my uncle. Wight and Mr. Norbury, and they sat with us a while drinking, of wine, of which I did give them plenty. But the two would not stay supper, but the other two did. And we were as merry as I could be with people that I do wish well to, but know not what discourse either to give them or find from them. We showed them our house from top to bottom, and had a good Turkey roasted for our supper, and store of wine, and after supper sent them home on foot, and so we to prayers and to bed.

1664: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys. His gradually improving wealth allowed him to buy silver cutlery, a high-status purchase at the time. "At noon dined, and after dinner, forth to several places to pay away money to clear myself in all the

world; and among other . . . the silversmiths 22 (pounds) 18 (shillings) for spoons, forks, and sugar box.”

1802: England

From the Grasmere Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth: “I went to K[eswick]. Wm rode before me [ie she sat behind him, on the same horse] to the foot of the hill nearest Keswick. . . . We ate some potted Beef on Horseback, and a sweet cake.”

1809: USA

Thomas Jefferson wrote to Gordon, Trokes & Co. to order some pasta:

I have mentioned the article of Maccaroni, not knowing if they are to be had in Richmond. I have formerly been supplied from Sartori’s works at Trenton, who makes them well, and would be glad to supply you should the Richmond demand make it worth your while to keep them. I paid him 16 cents the pound. [Letter goes on to order 20 lbs. of macaroni, among other items.]

DECEMBER 31

SAINT SYLVESTER’S DAY

St. Sylvester is particularly celebrated in Austria, Germany, Belgium, and Switzerland. In some regions of Germany and Austria, it is traditional to eat St. Sylvester’s Carp and to keep a few of the scales for luck) and lentil or split pea soup with sausages, and to drink St. Sylvester’s punch (red wine flavored with cinnamon and sugar and served with doughnuts).

IGUANODON DINNER

1853: London, England

A dinner was held on this night inside the mould of a giant iguanodon, at the Crystal Palace. The host was Benjamin Waterhouse, an artist-sculptor who became famous for the thirty-three dinosaur sculptures that he created for a great

exhibition at the Crystal Palace in London, with the assistance of paleontologist who coined the word *dinosaur*—Sir Richard Owen, the man who coined the word *dinosaur*. Until this time, no-one had any idea what dinosaurs may have actually looked like.

Waterhouse and Owen were joined at the dinner by twenty literary and scientific men, and a fine dinner was provided.

Soups.

Mock Turtle. Julien. Hare.

Fish.

Cod and Oyster Sauce. Fillets of Whiting. Turbot à l'Hollandaise.

Removes.

Roast Turkey. Ham. Raised Pigeon Pie.

Boiled Chicken and Celery Sauce.

Entrées.

Cotolettes de Mouton aux Tomates. Currie de Lapereaux au riz.

Salmi de Perdrix. Mayonnaise de filets de Sole.

Game.

Pheasants. Woodcocks. Snipes.

Sweets.

Macedoine Jelly. Orange Jelly. Bavaroise.

Charlotte Russe. French Pastry. Nougat à la Chantilly.

Buisson de Meringue aux [Confiture ?]

Dessert.

Grapes. Apples. Pears. Almonds and Raisins. French Plums.

Pines. Filberts. Walnuts &c, &c.

Wines.

Sherry. Madeira. Port. Moselle. Claret

A SURREAL DINNER

1916: France

The poet Guillaume Apollinaire was honored by some of his artist and writer friends at dinner in the dining room of the Palais d'Orsay on this day. The organizers were Pablo Picasso, Gris, Paul Dermée, Max Jacob, Pierre Reverdy and Blaise Cendrars. Ostensibly, the dinner was to celebrate the publication of Apollinaire's new work, *Le Poete assassine* which was published the same day, but it was also in celebration of Apollinaire's war service and his recovery from a severe shrapnel wound to the temple. The meal has become known as the Surreal Dinner, although the word was not coined until 1917—by Apollinaire himself.

The menu theme was artistic: there were *hors d'oeuvres cubists, orphistes, futurists* and “meditations in salads” and other similarly fantastical dishes.

THE HOUSEHOLD OF HENRY VII

1494: England

King Henry VII signed a number of regulations in relation to the running of his household, on this day. One item gives the process of serving the King's meals in the most minute detail.

How The King Ought To be Served In His Great Chamber

There ought daylie twoe yeomen of the crowne to sett upp the board, and two esquires at dinner and supper to take it downc; and if it please the Kinge to sitt before hee bee served of the first course, then both dinner and supper, twoe esquires to take upp the board betweene them; and when the

King is sett, then to sett the board downe againe; the which is most used on festivall dayes. Alsoe, at night there ought to bee in the chamber three torches, five, seven or nine; and as many fives sett upp as there bee torches; the havinge of them is much after the festival daies; and alsoe after as the cause requireth. These torches to bee houlden with yeomen of the crowne, or of the chamber; and if the King command water before supper, then there ought as many esquires as there bee yeomen with torches to goe to the yeomen and take the torches of them, and they to hould the torches till the King hath washed, and is sett: and then to deliver againe the torches to the same yeomen, and they to stand still till the board be served; and when the King is served with wafers or fruites, then the torches to come in and stand on the other side of the chamber; and when the Almoner doth take upp the board, the esquires againe to take the torches; and they to come neare the table doeing their obeysaunce; and they to stand still there till the Kinge bee upp and have washed. And then againe to deliver the torches to the yeomen, and to tarrie as longe as it shall please the Kinge, and the yeomen with the torches not to departe them before supper nor after; but to bee readie to receive the torches of the esquires; and whensoever the sewer goes to the kitchen to have a torche with him, and to bee borne before the meate by an esquire; and when the meate is sette on the board, then the torch to be delivered at the chamber doore to the sewers servant, whoe ought there to bee readie for: that purpose; and after the torches come once into the King's presence, there ought none to depart with noe manner of estate till they avoide all at once; and thus ought the King to bee day lie and nightlie served; alsoe the grand porter ought to have a ladder readie to sett upp siscs withall on a plate; which plate ought to be hanged on the uppermost fide of the arras.

ROYAL WARRANTS

2000: London, England

The famous London department store, Harrods, lost the Royal Warrant bestowed on it by the Duke of Edinburgh on this day. The official reason given was the “significant decline in the trading relationship” between the duke and the store, but it is likely that the deterioration in the relationship was rather more personal, given the circumstances of the death of Princess Diana and Dodi al-Fayed, son of the owner of Harrods.

Royal warrants are reviewed every five years, and renewal depends on the degree to which the royal family uses a product or service.

FOOD & WAR

1917: Britain, World War I

Sugar rationing was introduced—the first time food rationing had ever been imposed in Britain on any scale.

CORDON BLEU

1578: France

King Henri III founded *L'Ordre du Saint-Esprit* (the Order of the Holy Spirit) on this day. It was the most important and prestigious chivalric order in France. Knight of the order wore their emblem—the Cross of the Holy Spirit, from a blue riband, and they became known as *Les Cordon Bleus*. Over time, the phrase became extended to cover prestigious situations such as sporting events—and *Cordon Bleu* cookery.

EXPLORERS & ADVENTURERS

1844: Australia

From Ludwig Leichhardt's journal of his overland expedition in northern and central Australia:

We then rode up to the [native] camp, and found their dinner ready, consisting of two eggs of the brush turkey, roasted opossums, bandicoots, and iguanas. In their "dillis," (small baskets) were several roots or tubers of an oblong form, about an inch in length, and half an inch broad, of a sweet taste, and of an agreeable flavour, even when uncooked; there were also balls of pipe-clay to ornament their persons for corroborris. Good opossum cloaks, kangaroo nets, and dillis neatly worked of koorajong bark, were strewed about; there were also some spears, made of the Bricklow Acacia: all were forgotten in the suddenness of their retreat. I could not resist the temptation of tasting one of the eggs, which was excellent; but, as they

seemed to have trusted to our generosity.

. . . Yesterday we met with a new leguminous shrub. It belongs to the section Cassia, and has a long pinnate leaf, the leaflets an inch long, and half an inch broad. Its pods were about a foot long, half an inch broad; and every seed was surrounded by a fleshy spongy tissue, which, when dry, gave to the pod a slightly articulate appearance. The seeds, when young, had an agreeable taste, and the tissue, when dry, was pleasantly acidulous, and was eaten by some of my companions without any ill effect, whilst others, with myself, were severely purged.

JOURNALS & LETTERS

1663: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys. His wife had had a tooth drawn on December 27—a gruesome and painful experience in the days before anesthesia and good pain medication: “We had to dinner, my wife and I, a fine turkey and a mince pie, and dined in state, poor wretch, she and I, and have thus kept our Christmas together all alone almost, having not once been out.”

1666: London, England

From the diary of Samuel Pepys. He was very proud of his advancing wealth and status, and his collection of silver plates: “One thing I reckon remarkable in my own condition is that I am come to abound in good plate, so as all entertainments to be served wholly with silver plates, having two dozen and a half.”

Recipes

RECIPE	Year of Recipe	Almanac Date
Allemande Sauce	1846	January 17
Ananas [Pineapple] Tart	1736	August 9
Ankerstock (rye bread)	1827	January 1
Apricocks, to dry	1653	February 20
Aunt Nellie's Peanut Brown Bread	1916	January 5
Baked Crow	1936	September 8
Baked Oysters	1915	December 15
Bakewell Pudding	1845	April 18
Barley and Oatmeal War Bread	1918	January 18
Barm-Brack	1804	October 31
Bartlemas Beef	1664	August 24

Beavers' Tails, Canadian Recipe	1795	June 2
Beet Coffee	1861	August 24
Birch Wine	1824	December 10
Birds Nest Soup	1904	September 28
Birthday Syllabub	1845	July 11
Biscuit, a Receipt for making	1847	June 26
Black Bread for POWs	1941	November 24
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Black Caps	1774	January 7
Black Pudding	1830	November 11
Black Sauce for Mallard	1395	January 14

Blancmange	1783	January 7
Boiled Calf's Head	1939	November 1
Boston Baked Beans	1847	June 23
Boxy	1854	February 1
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Bride-Cake, and almond and sugar icings	1769	April 14
Brownies	1896	January 7
Cabbage, how to cure for use at sea	1769	April 9
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Carrot Marmalade	1918	September 1
Caudle, a fine	1739	August 21
Cawl	1942	November 21
Celery, Frizzled	1889	January 4
Charlotte Russe	1896	March 4

Charter Pie	1883	August 10
Chaud-Froid Sauce	1915	November 2
Cheshire Cheese, a Cheshire Maid's account	1746	November 25
Chocolate Mousse	1897	March 16
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Christmas Pudding, Official Peace Pudding	1918	December 9
Christmas Pudding, the King's	1927	October 22
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Cocktail Sauce	1936	September 26
Cod's Sounds, to boil	1845	October 16
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Comfits	1670	June 19
Compote, the way to make	1394	June 24

Corn-stalk Beer	1775	February 14
Cossack's Plum Pudding	1855	June 26
Cotelettes de Mouton a la Reform	1847	May 24
Cottonseed Flour Biscuits	1910	March 3
Cracknels, to make.	1685	March 15
Crimean Christmas Pudding	1857	June 20
Currant Wine	1848	October 2
Damper	1852	September 8
Dandelion Coffee	1846	September 29
Delmonico Sirloin	1893	February 24
Devil	1845	March 22
Devil's Food Cake	1918	September 1
Devonshire Squab Pie	1864	February 7

Dormice, Stuffed	4th/5th C	March 7
Dried Strawberries	1847	March 6
Duff	1862	May 20
Eggs à la Nabocoque	1972	November 18
Eisenhower's Soup	1954	March 18
Election Cake	1796	June 8
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Fish House Punch	1873	May 1
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Lemon Cream Pie	1885	May 2
Lobster Newberg or Delmonico	1893	February 24
Lorenzo Dressing	1944	January 19
Mahie	1846	June 9

Maids of Honour	1792	March 11
Maizena Cake	1848	September 4
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Metheglin, the Lady Vernon's White	1669	July 25
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Milk Punch	1763	October 11
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Mock Arrack	1817	July 2
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Molasses Coffee	1865	March 15

Montgomery Prize Ham	1850	October 5
Mr Marriott's Frigazee	1653	February 4
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Mutton Hams, to make	1784	December 6
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Neats-tongue Minc'd Pye	1670	July 6
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Pigs Trotters with Bread-crumbs.	1869	June 21
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Wyvern Pudding	1879	March 10
Yorkshire Parkin	1867	November 5
Yorkshire Pudding	1944	February 22

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